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REV. R. W. STORY, D.D., F.S.A. SCOT.

PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.





THE  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,  
PAST AND PRESENT:

ITS HISTORY, ITS RELATION TO THE LAW AND THE STATE,  
ITS DOCTRINE, RITUAL, DISCIPLINE, AND PATRIMONY.

EDITED BY

✓  
ROBERT HERBERT STORY, D.D. [Edin.] F.S.A.,  
PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,  
AND ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS.



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REV. A. K. H. BOYD, D.D.

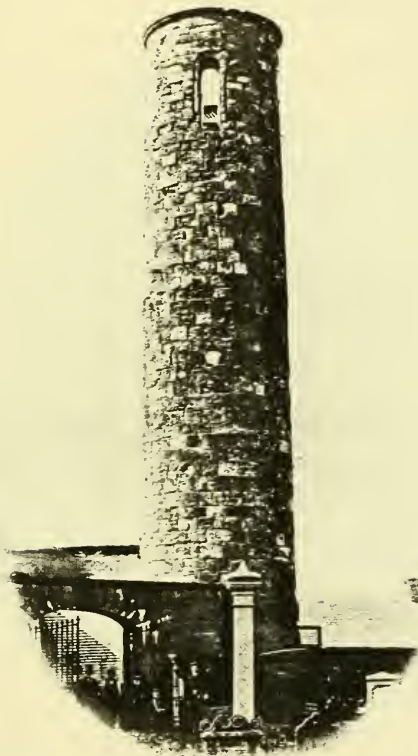
MODERATOR OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1890











ROUND TOWER OF ABERNETHY.









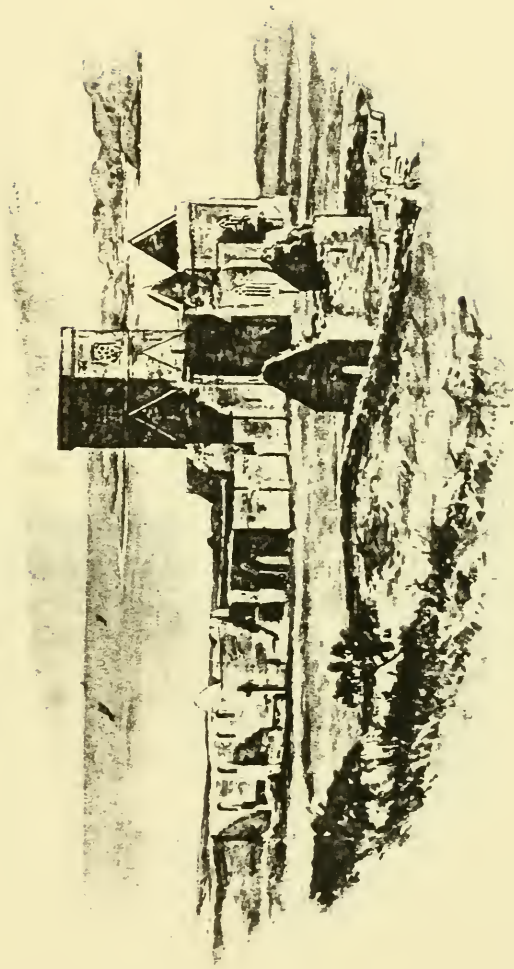


RUINS OF WHITHORN CATHEDRAL.









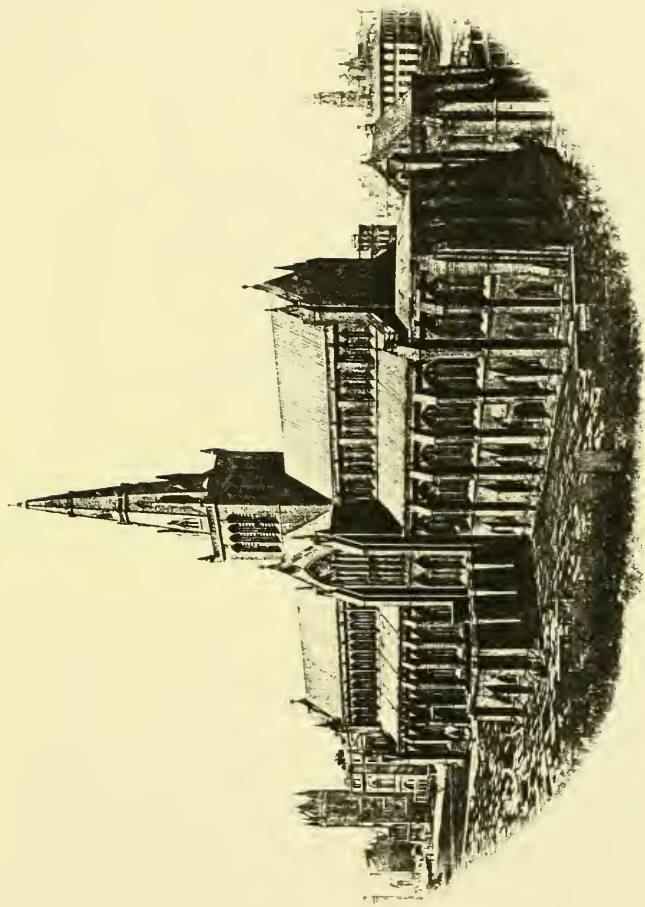
RUINS OF IONA CATHEDRAL











GLASGOW CATHEDRAL.





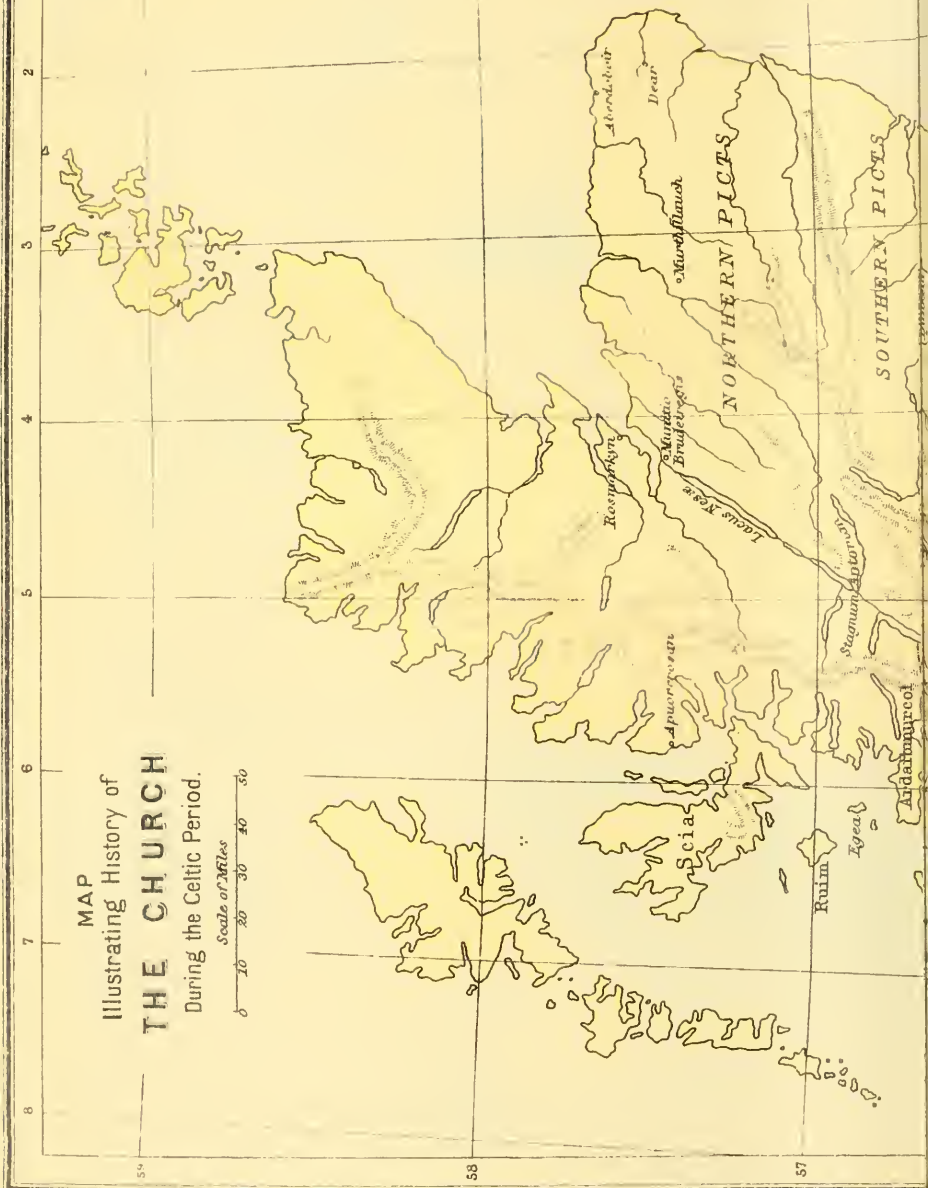




## Illustrating History of

During the Celtic Period.

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THE  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND:

FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO THE REIGN  
OF MALCOLM CANMORE.

BY

REV. JAMES CAMPBELL, D.D., F.S.A.

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FROM THE REIGN OF MALCOLM CANMORE  
TO THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

BY

REV. JAMES RANKIN, D.D.

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FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE  
PRESENT TIME.

BY

REV. T. B. W. NIVEN.



THE CHURCH IN ITS RELATION TO THE  
LAW AND THE STATE.

BY

ANDREW MACGEORGE.

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THE CHURCH'S DOCTRINE.

BY

REV. ADAM MILROY, D.D.

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THE CHURCH'S RITUAL.

BY

REV. THOMAS LEISHMAN, D.D.

---

THE CHURCH'S DISCIPLINE.

BY

REV. ANDREW EDGAR, D.D.

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TEINDS OR TITHES  
AND CHURCH PROPERTY IN SCOTLAND.

BY

NENION ELLIOT, S.S.C.



## P R E F A C E.

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THE history of the Church of Scotland has been so often written, that a new book on the same subject may perhaps be thought unnecessary. The histories of Dr. George Cook, of Mr. Grub, of Principal Cunningham, and the lectures of Principal Lee, leave little, indeed, to be desired in the way of careful and impartial narrative of events, and exhibition of principles, from the writers' respective points of view. But a glance at our title-page will show that these volumes are constructed on a plan more comprehensive than that of any existing history of the National Church. That plan embraces not only a narrative of events, drawn from the most authentic sources, and tracing the development of the Church from its first planting by Saint Ninian onwards to the present day ; but, in addition to, and distinct from this, a full exposition of the Church's relation to the Law and the State, of its Doctrine, Ritual, and Discipline, and of the nature of the property it holds in its Teinds, or tithes.

Each of these subjects is separately treated, in a section of the work devoted to itself. The obvious advantage of this method is that the information upon each of them, which, otherwise, the reader would have to search for and disentangle from other topics at various points of the general history, is presented to him in one continuous sequence, uninterrupted by the intrusion of matters with which it has no necessary connection. Its incidental disadvantage is that each treatise, upon these individual subjects, runs some risk of overlapping,

at this point or at that, one or another of the rest. It has been impossible to avoid this wholly: indeed it could not have been absolutely prevented without impairing the completeness of the several treatises. To see that these should be full and exhaustive in themselves has been the editor's desire, rather than to secure that none should trespass, by a page's length, on ground traversed by another.

Although each division of the book is the work of a different author, invited to contribute a share because of his known competence for the task, it will be found that, throughout the whole, there is a harmony of design and of treatment. Each of the separate dissertations exhibits its subject, in relation to the historical development of the Church; while that development is traced, in the preceding narratives, so as to exhibit the natural progress and essential continuity which are its characteristics.

The questions treated in these dissertations are all questions round which have gathered, from time to time, the keenest interest and the sharpest controversy.

The relation of the Church to the Law and the State is, to this day, the centre of eager polemic. The principles involved in the Secession of 1843 have still their zealous defenders and vigorous assailants, who respectively affirm, and deny, that the "spiritual independence" of the Church was sacrificed to the maintenance of that relation, when to maintain it was no longer compatible with loyalty to the ecclesiastical constitution. On this alleged infringement of the rights and liberties of the Church, is based a plea for the theory that the true welfare of a Church must always be hindered, and never can be promoted, by an alliance with the State. Reproach is cast, by one party, on the Established Churches because they are in a state of alleged serfage to "Cæsar;" while, by another, the boasted liberty of the unestablished Churches is derided as an altogether illusory possession, powerless either to evade, or to survive, the rude shock of contact with the civil courts. While opinion is thus divided, and prejudices are strong, the formation of a reasonable—because intelligent—judgment on the points at issue, is vastly



facilitated by such a lucid exposition, as is given in our first dissertation, of the relation of the Church to the Law and the State, from the days of her earliest organization, onwards to those in which wilful impatience of a statutory constitutional control threatened a rupture of the time-honoured association of the civil and ecclesiastical powers.

There has been no considerable doctrinal agitation in the Church for more than fifty years. When the arm of dogmatic intolerance was last raised, it was to expel from the Church's ministry her saintliest and profoundest divine. The deposition of John Macleod Campbell, followed, a few years later, by that of Thomas Wright of Borthwick, would seem to have appeased the jealous spirit of Calvinistic dogmatism. It has demanded no later sacrifice. But though its voice has not been heard, and no doctrinal controversy has been stirring for these many years, Scottish theology has not been dormant. In no church, we make bold to say, has theological thought advanced with better regulated steps, towards light and liberty, than in the Church of Scotland. The quietude in which controversy has been hushed has not been the silence of sleep or of death, but of peaceful progress, making its way without laborious and noisy conflict with opposing forces. The relation of that progress to movements, whether of advance or of reaction, in former periods, and its essential harmony with the best elements of the theology of the Church in its earlier stages of development, cannot be justly understood, without some such review of her dogmatic history as we present in the dissertation on Doctrine.

The Ritual of the Church, unlike her doctrine, has been the subject of recent variance and dispute in the Church courts. Even yet, among certain classes, and in some districts of the country, both little affected by the diffusion of modern culture, the idea prevails that an ugly building, and a service to which art has lent no attractiveness, are more appropriate to the worship of God than a seemly house of prayer, and a reverently adjusted ritual. It is of importance, both for the

correction of such ignorance and prejudice, and for the justification of those who, in spite of some obloquy, have done their best to redeem the Church from the reproach of resting content in slovenly rites, that we should possess, as we do, in the dissertation on Ritual, a comprehensive view of the history of the public worship and sacred offices of the Church, from their earliest forms in the Celtic missions and monasteries, through their conformity to Roman usage, and their various vicissitudes after the Reformation, onward to the recent period, when a more devout feeling and refined taste began to displace what was uncouth, and to restore what was lacking.

The Discipline of the Church had, before the Reformation, become so closely entangled with the superstitions and abuses of the Romish polity, and has, since that critical era, been administered, at first with such unreasonable stringency, and latterly with such varieties of method and of strictness, that the student of the disciplinary principles and system of the Scottish branch of the Church Catholic, will be thankful for the flood of light thrown on these by Dr. Edgar's dissertation.

The patrimony of the Kirk is a wide subject; but the large portion of it included under the familiar term "Teind" is that which is of most immediate interest to the parochial incumbent, and which has been made the object of most frequent misrepresentation, on the part of those who seek to maintain the thesis that the Teind was bestowed on the Kirk by the State, and may be resumed at its pleasure. That this thesis is inconsistent with the facts and the law of the case, we venture to think, will be apparent to the impartial reader, on a perusal of the last of our dissertations—contributed by a writer, whose official position is at once a guarantee of his mastery of his subject, and of his accuracy of statement.

The more strictly historical narrative, which occupies our earlier volumes, although going over ground which, as we have said, has been often traversed, will be found to contain a considerable amount of matter not hitherto embodied in any single work upon the church history of Scotland. This is particularly

the case in the first volume. Year by year the patient research of such Irish scholars as Dean Reeves, the learned editor of Adamnan, and of Dr. Stokes, professor of Ecclesiastical History in Trinity College, Dublin, along with that of their Scottish *confrères*, Mr. W. F. Skene, historiographer royal, and Mr. Joseph Anderson—to name no others—has been rescuing facts hitherto unknown, or known imperfectly, from the obscurity of ancient records or unverified traditions, and adding new elucidations and illustrations to those already ascertained. Since the days when Dr. Cook—even since the days when Principal Lee—wrote, the publications of the Bannatyne, the Spalding, and other clubs, have made manifold and substantial additions to the materials available for the construction of a genuine Scottish ecclesiastical history. Along with these should be mentioned, with honour, the “*Statuta Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ*” of the late Joseph Robertson, and Bishop Forbes’ “*Calendars of Scottish Saints*.” At a more recent date, the labours of the various antiquarian and archæological societies have rendered their “*Transactions*” storehouses of fresh and invaluable information; while the achievements of individual explorers in the fields of folk lore, of parochial registers, and family records, of ecclesiology, and liturgiology, have rendered services to the cause of historical accuracy and thoroughness which merit the heartiest acknowledgment. The results of the work accomplished on these several lines of investigation, and by so many explorers, have contributed to the fulness and completeness of the annals presented in this book.

In that section of our history which treats of the four centuries of the Roman ascendancy, the exceptionally ample details bearing on the monastic and cathedral establishments, and on the parochial organization of the Church, will help the reader to realize, as without these he could not, the Church’s inner life, her methods and administration, and the character of her relations to the people.

The last division of the narrative, in its concluding chapters, is brought down to a later date than that which any existing

history reaches. The events of this period it has, naturally, been impossible to treat with the fulness that some readers might perhaps expect. We cannot speak of the actions of contemporaries, or of those whose too recent withdrawal from amongst the ways of men it is yet hard to realize, with the unbiassed freedom proper to the historian and the critic. We have, here, but indicated the lines of wise and constitutional progress on which the Church is advancing, and the points at which reform in usage or administration has been effected. We have not entered into full detail; nor have we mentioned the names of all the churchmen who have helped to guide the councils and shape the policy of the Church, in the later years of the decade which has just closed. There are two, however, specially identified with the Church's life and influence in that decade, which claim a special tribute from the compilers of any work which, like this, professes to set forth the history and the principles of the National Church of Scotland.

Kenneth Macleay Phin and John Tulloch were, in their time, her most representative men. Dr. Phin was a leader in all the practical work of the Church—always animated by a loyal devotion to her name and cause, and by a high ideal of what her ministry ought to be. Principal Tulloch, as a theologian, as a man of letters, as a preacher of persuasive earnestness and catholic breadth of view, as a professor of divinity and educationist, as a speaker of singularly sympathetic fervour and impressive power, as an official of the General Assembly and adept in the conduct of ecclesiastical business, wielded a strong and varied influence, and freely lent his great powers to the service of the Church in every department of her life, and thought, and polity. The Scottish Church of the future will hold no name, on the roll of the churchmen of the nineteenth century, in higher honour than his.

It has not been thought necessary, or expedient, to enter upon questions of current interest, whose proper place in history cannot be determined until the discussions, which gather round them, shall have ceased. Little, therefore, has been said, in



the body of this work, about the Disestablishment agitation, which reached a crisis in 1885-86 that showed, unmistakably, the feeling of the majority of the people of Scotland to be, notwithstanding many voluble asseverations to the contrary, unfavourable to the abolition of the ancient Establishment, and the rupture of the time-honoured connection between Church and State. Little reference, likewise, has been made to the somewhat visionary projects of union between the Church and other religious bodies in Scotland, which from time to time have been discussed in the Church courts, and in the columns of the daily press. These projects—whether originating with those Nonconformists of the Presbyterian type, who have adopted Disestablishment as the correlative of their Voluntaryism, or with those (and they are but few) of the Episcopal communion, who sympathize with the venerable Bishop Wordsworth in his desire to reunite the estranged churches—are as yet too indeterminate to take a place among the facts of history.

A few words are needful in explanation of the principle upon which we have introduced the illustrations that embellish these volumes. We have thought, and we believe rightly, that we should enhance their interest by adding to the letterpress illustrations of two classes:—of places connected with important events in the Church's history; and of personages who have taken a notable part in her affairs, or who have exercised a distinctive influence upon her thought and life, or who have earned general recognition for zeal in her service, or whose names have won respect and honour from their owners' character and worth. All the illustrations of the first class have been carefully prepared from the best photographs, either already existing, or taken on purpose for this publication. In some cases, as in those of Iona and Whithorn, the buildings which formed the early Christian settlements have long since disappeared; and we can only present the outlines of the ruins of those that succeeded them, along with the unchang-

ing natural features of the scene. In others, as in those of Glasgow, Dunkeld, and Dunblane, enough remains undestroyed to remind us of the aspect the holy places of our fathers wore before the Reformation. The illustrations of the second class have been chosen and executed with equal care. Some of them are from original portraits never before published or reproduced in photography or engraving, and thus possess a unique interest. To the owners of these we offer our sincere thanks for their kind permission to make use of them. Of course the Columban era and the earlier Roman, present a blank as far as the likenesses of their prominent churchmen are concerned, but even the sixteenth century has only a meagre list of authentic portraits to show. Among those of the nineteenth we have included several of churchmen who are with us still (as we trust they may be for many a year to come), and who are entitled to a place in any gallery to which those only are admitted, who have deserved well of the ecclesiastical commonwealth.

Besides these illustrations, the reader will find three maps. The first of these represents the Scotland of the Celtic or Columban Church; the second, the Scotland of the Roman Church; the third, the Scotland of the Reformed Church. In the first are given the sites of the great monastic missions, and the districts occupied by the several tribes. In the second the country is represented as divided into the dioceses of the Roman Church; and in the third as divided into the synods of the Reformed—a division, we believe, never before exhibited in any map. We should have included under it, the subdivision into presbyteries; but to mark the outlines of the eighty-four presbyteries with sufficient distinctness, would have required more space than our page affords. A study of these maps will materially help the reader to understand the changes, civil and ecclesiastical, that have passed over Scotland since the day Columba landed on the shore of Iona.

In the earliest map we see the larger part of the country, now called Scotland, inhabited by the Picts, northern and

southern, who have spread themselves all over the region beyond the Forth, except where the Scots of Dalriada have pressed them back from the west coast, and have occupied what is now Argyll. Southern Scotland is divided between the Angles of the kingdom of Bernicia on the east, who have pushed northwards to the Forth, and the Britons of Strathclyde on the west, who stretch from Alclud to below Carlisle. An isolated tribe—the Niduari Picts—hold Galloway, between the Britons and the sea. Within the bounds of this shred of Pictland is the earliest Christian settlement in Scotland—the “Candida Casa” of Ninian. Next to it in venerable age is the Glesghu, or Glascu, of Kentigern. But the great majority of the religious places, that are scattered over the country, sparsely in the north, and more numerous in the Midland and Lothian districts, mark the sites of Columban missions—from Apercrossan in the distant north-west, to Murthlach and Deer, in Mar and Buchan—from Dunkeld by the Tay to Mailros beside the Tweed—from Dull under the shadow of the Grampians, to Kilrymont looking out upon the wild North Sea. All these were the children of Iona, planted by Columba and his disciples, and forming bright centres of Christian civilization, whence the “savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion.” There is no sign at that time of any *national* life. There is no regular industry. There is not a single collection of dwellings deserving the name of a town. The Scotland that is to be, with its trade, its industries, its art, its education, its church and state, is yet in embryo; but its fructifying germs lie hidden in these Celtic monasteries and missions.

And these were the sources of Christian life and light not to their own rough country only, but to the countries over sea. The Celtic era of our Church was the era of its most active missionary enterprise. The Celtic heralds of the cross, fired by the spirit of Columba, were known far and wide throughout Europe. “Everywhere, and generally where we expect it least,” says the late saintly Bishop Ewing, referring

to the memorials of these early apostles that lie scattered over the Continent, "we come upon the traces of those early countrymen; and few things are more touching than to find ourselves at home with them in a far-off land, where no one knows so much of them as ourselves, and where their names are less familiar to the natives than to us. In Switzerland they still pray for the Scotch and Irish, not knowing why. We know; and it is pleasant to stand at St. Gall, and to think that he who first brought Christianity hither was one of ourselves, one to whom, perhaps Lochaber, Armagh, and certainly Iona, were familiar. The very names, although disguised, are Gaelic—Cataldo, Macautius, and Muiredachus: are they not Cothal, Mac-Ian, and Murdoch?"\*

The second map marks the consummation of an essential change in the condition of the country. The Celtic element of the population still remains, but it is no longer the predominant element, and it has receded towards the north. To the south of the Grampians, Britons, Angles, and Scots have begun to amalgamate into something like a homogeneous nationality. The central authority of a single monarch has gained recognition. The Norman-English modes of life, usages, and manners, have leavened the rough social conditions of the northern kingdom. The people have gathered into towns; industry and commerce and agriculture have begun to supersede tribal feuds and predatory habits. By and by the great monastic houses diffuse the arts of civilization and the refining grace of education. The Church parts with its distinctively Celtic character. The old tribal authority of the patriarchal abbot gives place to the diocesan jurisdiction of the bishop. Rome has laid its strong hand upon the ecclesiastical community, and moulded it into conformity with the Catholic usage and government, at the head of which stands the successor of St. Peter. The Scottish border runs from the Solway to the Tweed, and the country is parcelled out into dioceses, each with its cathedral and its bishop. The old territorial

\* Memoir of Alexander Ewing, p. 430.



divisions still are, to some extent, preserved in the ecclesiastical redistribution. The see of Argyll, with its cathedral at Lismore, is conterminous with what had been the colony of the Dalriadic Scots. The unwieldy diocese of Glasgow follows the lines of the extinct kingdom of Strathclyde. The bishopric of Galloway occupies the former territory of the Niduari Picts, and enthrones its bishop at Whithorn as the successor of St. Ninian. Dunkeld, Dunblane, Brechin, and St. Andrews preserve in their respective sees the memories of Celtic saints and Culdee settlements, and the boundaries within which their influence had been supreme. The chief cathedral cities take the lead in the gradual advance of order, of culture, and of humanizing knowledge. Glasgow, St. Andrews, Aberdeen, are the homes of active communities growing in intelligence, in social organization, in wealth, and enterprise; and their universities are the nurseries of a learning which, by and by, makes the name of many a Scottish man of letters known among the scholars of the Continent.

From the days of David to those of Mary, the ecclesiastical map remains without substantial change. Then comes the great revolution, which rolls it up, and unfolds it under a new aspect, in which the former outlines have been erased; and the territorial divisions are laid down on a new plan. The Church has reconstituted itself upon an altered basis. The government is no longer in the hands of abbots, as in the Celtic period; nor in the hands of diocesan bishops, as in the Roman; but in those of presbyters, acting together in church courts. The diocesan episcopate has been utterly swept away; and the power which it had exercised, or ought to have exercised, is vested in the General Assembly, with its subordinate courts, the synod and the presbytery. The synod corresponds in territorial extent, more nearly than the presbytery, to the ancient diocese—indeed in some cases, as in Galloway, Argyll, and Orkney, the Reformed synod is closely conterminous with the old ecclesiastical area. But in the readjustment which followed the Reformation, more attention

was paid than formerly to the actual wants of the population, and less to the perpetuation of local divisions originating in abbatial jurisdiction, or in tribal occupancy, or in distinctions of race. Instead of the thirteen Roman dioceses there are sixteen Presbyterian synods, embracing under their jurisdiction eighty-four presbyteries. There is no definite rule as to the number of presbyteries which the synod should contain; and it varies from eight in Glasgow, Ayr, and Aberdeen, to three in Galloway, Ross, Sutherland and Caithness, and Orkney and Shetland. The number of parishes within a presbytery is also a variable quantity, rising in the case of Glasgow as high as eighty-two, falling in the case of Lewis as low as six. As time advances, and the Church grows with it, the roll of her parishes is constantly gaining additions, the free and flexible system of organization and government readily lending itself to the extension of the Church and the accompanying enlargement of her courts.

The synod, standing as it does intermediate between the presbytery and the General Assembly, is a court whose meetings might be rendered much more available, than they generally are, for the purposes of clerical supervision and conference. In a presbytery the members are, commonly, too intimately connected by ties of neighbourhood and amity to make the inspection of each other's work, or the criticism of methods and results, an agreeable duty, and to secure its impartial discharge. The episcopal function of the presbyters might be rendered more efficacious if it were assisted by a committee of synod, which should annually pass through the bounds—visiting and confirming the churches. This, or the alternative plan of restoring the office of superintendent, is almost a necessity for the proper administration of presbyterial government and discipline. Questions, also, of polity or of doctrine, can be discussed with greater freedom and thoroughness in the larger arena of the synod than in the presbytery. The synod sermon of the Scottish, should be equivalent to the bishop's charge of the Anglican, Church; and the dull and

uninteresting system of rotation, which, as a rule, governs the choice of the moderator, ought to give place to a careful selection, which would secure that the chair of the synod should be occupied by no one whose sermon was not certain to be thoughtful, well reasoned, and adapted to the times. The tendency to congregational isolation, to which all communions are, more or less, liable, would be corrected by the synod's gathering into a focus, at its half-yearly meetings, the interests and activities, the intelligence, and the pious thought, of the churches throughout the province, of which it is, in theory, if not always in practice, the ecclesiastical overseer. In this court, as in some other departments of our Presbyterian system, there are latent possibilities of usefulness that wait to be fully developed. Some of the modes of this development may, perhaps, be suggested by a study of our map of the synodical provinces of the Church.

The motive of this work, as a whole, as the reader will have no difficulty in discerning, is to hold up to view the development of the Church of Scotland, from its foundation onwards, in the unbroken continuity of its relation to the Scottish nation on the one hand and the Church Catholic on the other; to present the history of the Kirk—to use a beloved and familiar name—in its identity, as a national branch of the Church Catholic, preserving through many centuries, and under successive modifications, its national characteristics, along with its creed, its government, and its ministry.

We trace its origin and expansion under the influences of the Celtic monasticism, which governed it for more than 500 years, until the character of the people lost its predominantly Celtic features, and simultaneously the system of Rome superseded that of Iona. We mark the orderly growth of the renovated, but not revolutionized, institution, under the diocesan Episcopacy which followed the submission to Rome, and the subsequent deterioration of the clerical orders and loosening hold of the Church upon the people, until, after a tenure of

over 400 years, the Roman dominion was renounced, and the enfranchised Church started on a new and autonomous career. We then see her enter on a troubled course of vicissitudes and perils, amid which her creed and constitution were the rallying points of the sturdy patriotism, no less than of the rational piety, of the people, until, at last, the protracted reign of civil oppression and ecclesiastical confusion was closed by the memorable Revolution, which vindicated at once the liberties of the nation, and the rights of the Church. Thence we follow her progress through the chequered experiences of the last 200 years, until we reach the firm standing ground she now occupies—strong in the attachment of her people, in the integrity of her principles, and the soundness of her constitution—still, as of old, the national branch of the Church Catholic—the mother church of the undoubted majority of the Scottish people, and in harmony, in her creed and government, with all the Reformed Churches.

We have sought to set forth the history, of which these are the outlines, in no controversial spirit, and with the equitableness that deals fairly with all parties alike. No one of our contributors has written as a partisan. We have endeavoured, and we hope not unsuccessfully, to delineate the history of the Church from the standpoint of a constitutional churchman and patriot; and to do so with a single eye to the truth of our story. We have sought to exclude nothing that is of interest, or that is necessary to the right understanding of the facts; and to include nothing that is of doubtful authenticity, or that is not worth recording.

While desiring, however, to avoid controversial questions, it is impossible, in presenting this book to the people of Scotland, to overlook the fact that within the last five years the subject of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church, whose history it records, has been pressed upon the public mind with considerable urgency. This urgency appears to be traceable to four principal causes:—First, the general advance of democratic sentiment towards the assertion of what is called “Reli-



gious Equality;" second, the exigencies of a political party, which hopes to rivet an alliance with Scottish dissent by adopting Disestablishment as one of its leading principles; third, the jealousy with which the position of the Church is viewed by some of the Nonconformists; fourth, a somewhat vague aspiration after a general Presbyterian union, to which Disestablishment is supposed to be a necessary preliminary. Without entering into the calculation of the relative force of these several motives, but recognizing that in their combination they constitute an aggregate of undoubted weight, capable of acquiring formidable momentum under the guidance of skilful tacticians, we think it worth while to suggest the thoughtful consideration of some of the lessons of the long and beneficent union that has subsisted between Church and State in Scotland, where in all great crises in the national history the Church has ranged herself emphatically on the side of the rights and liberties—civil and religious—of the people.

The Church always was, as she is still, the people's Church. She holds her patrimony for their behoof. Her constitution and government are essentially popular, and trace their principles, not to patristic and mediæval, but to primitive and apostolic, sources. The democracy, if rightly instructed, might be expected to rally round the democratic Church, which, after many a conflict with absolutism, was re-established on its present basis, in 1690, at the desire of the people, and exists only for their moral and spiritual benefit.

That the Church is fully conscious of her duty, as the Church of the people, and is doing her best to fulfil it, is proved by her condition at this day.

With her originated that movement of freer theological thought, which has rendered the teaching of her pulpits adequate to the varied wants of modern life in a degree previously unattained in any Scottish communion. Within her that movement has proceeded with an orderly and even development, which has never lapsed into irregularity, or become the occasion of dissension and scandal. It was she who

fought and won the battle of enriched and beautified ritual against Puritanic prejudice and careless insensibility—a victory whose advantages are shared by thousands who are not within her pale.

Near half a century has passed since the Church was left, as those who deserted her supposed, to perish of inanition and decay; and she is now more active, more beneficent, better equipped at every point, than she was then. On the 18th of May, 1843, the Church had 970 parishes, 289 of which were left vacant by the secession of their ministers. She has now 1373 parishes, having added to the original number, by her own voluntary effort, no less than 403—each provided with the endowment which the law requires of, at least, £100 per annum, and a manse. In addition to these she maintains 144 unendowed mission chapels or stations. Her Home Mission income and expenditure, which in 1842 was £5000, and in 1843 sank to a little over £2000, has in several recent years exceeded £10,000. The revenue at the disposal of her Foreign Mission committee, as reported to last General Assembly, was £31,361. The sum expended in supporting Scottish churches “furth of Scotland” was, in 1888, £4846; in supporting her Jewish Mission, £6344; in supplementing parochial livings of less than £200 a year, over £8000; in aiding the fund for providing for aged and infirm ministers on their retirement, £3251. She has 2085 Sunday schools, with a staff of over 20,000 teachers, and a roll of over 216,000 scholars. She possesses a band of willing and able coadjutors in her 8558 elders; and that she is successful in reviving the primitive order of the diaconate is proved by her having 262 more deacons in 1888 than she had in 1887. In the Highlands and Islands, where the Church suffered most from the secession of 1843, and which form still her weakest point, she spent, in the same year, £2262 in repairing churches and manses, and in securing the regular performance of public worship in outlying and ill-provided districts. The number of communicants on her communion rolls, at last report, is 581,568—a number exceeding by not less than 100,000 the combined membership of the Presbyterian dissenters.

We mention these good works of the Church, to which we might add many more, and we quote these statistics, not with any desire to glory in them or to suggest a contrast with other churches, but to demonstrate her fidelity to her trust, and to compare the significance of these facts with the often repeated allegation that State connection is injurious, if not fatal, to the higher life and welfare of any church, "paralyses" its action, and tends to render it careless and idle. If so, whence come these indisputable evidences of the health, devotion, and energy of the National Church in Scotland? Could any church give stronger proof of her vitality, and of her sense of the duty she owes to the nation, whose religious principles she embodies, and of whose national life she is the most characteristic representative—as those who study this history will own that she is now and has always been?

In no department of these good works does the Church find her freedom fettered, or her activity impeded, by the State. On the contrary, much of that freedom and activity would be practically obstructed, but for that well-ordered basis of territorial organization on which it is carried out, and whose continuance and integrity are guaranteed by the union with the State.

Practical activity, effective organization, and liberal contributions to ecclesiastical and benevolent objects, are not, however, the very highest proofs that a church's life is at its core sound and vigorous. Its condition is more genuinely tested by other than material standards. What evidence does it give of intellectual vitality, of spiritual elevation, of moral earnestness? If the state connection be fatal to all the best elements of a church's life, the fatality must manifest itself in the lack of any signs of its possessing these. But here, too, the Church when tried is not found wanting.

No one who knows the social condition of Scotland, especially in the rural districts, will deny that the clergy of the National Church constitute an element in society whose influence is, in a marked degree, salutary, is exerted on the side of industry

and order, of peace and good will, tends to unite class to class, and is beneficent, particularly, to the uncared-for and the needy. No one who is acquainted with Scottish thought and literature will deny that the cause of education, of culture, of letters, of religion, owes much to the Scottish clergy. We are apt to forget how small a band that clergy forms, and therefore to underrate the amount and value of its contributions to that literature, which is the surest measure of a nation's intellectual and moral stature. There are not more than 1500 beneficed clergymen in the Scottish establishment. There are, we suppose, over 20,000 in the English. We venture to say that, in proportion to their numbers and their advantages, the work of the lesser company need not fear comparison with that of the greater. There are no clerical sinecures, or pluralities, north of the Tweed; no prebendaries' and canons' stalls in wealthy cathedrals; no rich deaneries in pleasant closes under the shade of immemorial towers; no masterships and provostries worth their thousands a year; no homes of learned leisure and endowed research. Poverty, and not affluence, is the note of the northern Church; and yet, as "Jupiter" Carlyle said long ago, and as is still true, it is a "*paupertas fecunda virorum*." Not to go back beyond the record of living authors, and passing over the names of such men as John Robertson, Archibald Clerk, Crawford, Service, Tulloch, Macleod, and others, whom we have too lately lost; nor mentioning any of those who, though distinguished as authors and as loyal churchmen, are yet not in the ranks of the clergy, we can point to writers who are well known to the educated world and to the Reformed Church, not only within, but far beyond the limits of Scotland.

Dr. Flint, professor of theology in Edinburgh, by his "Philosophy of History," and his works on Theism and on Anti-theistic Theories, has made his name familiar to the students and scholars both of Europe and America. Principal Caird's "Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion" is widely recognized as ranking among the ablest of contemporary contributions to the most profound and sacred of the sciences; and he has



proved by that, as well as by other works, that the most popular of preachers may be also the most thoughtful and philosophical of divines. His colleague, Professor Dickson, has applied his varied erudition and thorough scholarship both to the elucidation of critical passages and phrases of holy writ, and to the translation, for the use of English readers, of some of the most important products of German learning and research. Dr. Milligan, of Aberdeen, one of the company of revisers of the Authorized Version, has written, with much critical knowledge and spiritual insight, valuable and highly appreciated treatises upon the Resurrection, and the Revelation of St. John. Dr. Gloag, moderator of the Assembly of 1889, has made many and substantial contributions to the literature of Biblical criticism and hermeneutics. And what writer of essays and sermons is better known and more lovingly read, in Britain and America, than his successor in the moderator's chair—the familiar “A.K.H.B.”—Dr. Boyd of St. Andrews? Dr. Sprott has brought the results of long study and painstaking research to bear upon the illustration of the too little understood subject of the ritual and liturgical history of the Church, in works which are the best existing guides of the student in that department. Principal Cunningham, of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, carries on the literary tradition of Rutherford, of Hill, of Tulloch, and in his History of the Church of Scotland has given his countrymen the most lively narrative of her events and the most liberal exposition of the Church's principles hitherto constructed; while in Dr. Mitchell, his colleague in St. Mary's, the Westminster Assembly has found its *vates sacer*, and the Confession of Faith a loyal and learned apologist. Dr. Matheson of St. Bernard's, whose mental energy his risen superior to the physical infirmity which he shares with Milton, has discussed with rare philosophical acumen the problems which modern science opposes to the Christian faith, and has enriched Hymnology with many beautiful songs of Zion. We might refer to others doing excellent work and wielding, through their writings as well as from their pulpits, a bene-

ficent intellectual and moral influence; but those we have named are enough to serve as witnesses to the fact that in the domain of literature the Church of Scotland is not idle nor her voice dumb, and that we find there no vouchers for the allegation that the Church's connection with the State benumbs her mental vigour, and paralyses her intellectual activities.

We do not pretend to maintain that the highest qualities, intellectual and moral, mark the Scottish clergy of the National Church in a degree unequalled in the case of the clergy of other churches. But we affirm that, as a rule, in their character, conduct, and attainments, no impartial eye will discover the deterioration induced by the sinister influences of an inequitable and degrading system.

Where flaws and defects exist, and scandals arise, they are such as are to be found, unfortunately, in all churches, established and unestablished, and with which their relations to the state have nothing whatever to do. The faults, that occasionally obtrude themselves on one's notice, are, in most cases, such as would be effectually checked by a more careful superintendence, and a somewhat stricter discipline than that which is generally exercised by the Church courts. The principle of "Presbyterian parity" does not demand that presbyters shall be exempt from official supervision, or that the supervision shall be exercised by a presbytery only. The function of the "superintendent," chosen from among his brethren, for the discharge of the special duties which the title suggests, was found useful in the Church in its sub-Reformation period. There is no reason why it should not be revived, and prove equally useful now. Its revival could not fail to stimulate the energies, encourage the labours, and promote the efficiency of the clergy, in general; and to check any tendency to professional negligence, where such should be detected, in particular.

There is an aspect of the Disestablishment policy, which concerns not the Kirk only, but the general interest and honour of all the Reformed Churches. The triumph of that policy

would be a triumph for the unreformed church, whose communion the churches of the Reformation renounced.

As long as that sturdy Church, which was "reformed from Popery by presbyters," stands firm on its national basis, established by the people's will, and maintaining the reformed doctrine and Presbyterian government, the Church of Rome cannot pretend to have reoccupied her place and reasserted her authority in Scotland. But let that reformed Church cease to exist as a national institution, upheld by the popular will; let her property be secularized; let her courts cease to be courts of the realm; her creed cease to be part of the constitution of the state; her territorial divisions cease to mark jurisdictions recognized by the law of the land; and the Roman Church will, in the judgment of the world at large, and in the view of history, regain the *status quo ante bellum*. She will resume the position vacated by the disendowed and discredited Establishment. The pretensions of Scottish Episcopacy will not stand in comparison with hers, on any ground of historical validity. If the reformed Church be displaced, the unreformed will, uninvited, take the place left vacant.

Recent secessions to Rome among the territorial magnates, as well as the undoubted spread of Romanism in certain classes of the "lower orders," as they are (not always justly) called, indicate that, were this place resumed by the Roman Church, the resumption would, in some quarters, enlist no small measure of enthusiastic sympathy and liberal support. Nor would the Church of Rome's confidence, in again taking up the style and title of the Church of Scotland, be lessened by her knowledge of the fact that unestablished churches show a frequent tendency to organic disintegration and doctrinal instability.

We do not need to look for evidence of this beyond the facts of our own national experience.

The first Scottish seceders quitted the Church in 1733; and before the end of the century the body they founded had split into four subordinate divisions. They renounced the Church because of its unfaithfulness in respect of a number of prin-

ciples and practices, probably not one of which their descendants now hold by. The secession of 1843 was effected by men who alleged, and no doubt in all honesty, that they continued steadfast to all the principles of the Church which they abandoned; and within fifty years of their secession, they have thrown overboard one of the most vital of these principles; and they are understood to be much embarrassed with alleged doctrinal defections from the very standards which they embodied in their original constitution. It would appear that schism begets schism; that the sectarian spirit is apt to engender laxity in doctrine; and that the judicial support of a well-adjusted state connection may prove a salutary bulwark of the faith.

The Church of Scotland, as now established, stands before the world as a national church more closely identified than any other with fidelity to the principles of the Reformation, as it was wrought out in Switzerland and in this country. She is honoured as having borne a notable testimony for purity of doctrine, worship, and discipline. Her constitution is a standing protest against the traditionalism and sacerdotalism which, repudiated in the sixteenth century, have begun again to assert their influence and to pervert the faith of the nineteenth. Let her candlestick be removed out of its place; and, whatever may remain, the Reformed Churches of Europe will own, with sorrow, that the light of a *national* testimony, which, for more than three centuries, has shone, sometimes with diminished brightness and sometimes with unrivalled lustre, is at last extinguished.

It seems not inappropriate, in the preface to a work like this, which traces the history of this Church before and after her separation from Rome—before and after the growth of that dissent which has withdrawn many of the people from her ministry, and led them to forego their share in the benefits conferred on the nation by her establishment—to suggest these points for consideration, bearing immediately, as they do, on a policy which at the present time is, on the one side, so persistently advocated, and on the other, so warmly resented.



They are considerations deserving the attention of all patriotic Scotsmen; for the question of the continuance of the Church's present relation to the Scottish nation is one that appeals "to all the higher patriotic sentiments of the people—on which," to quote the words of Principal Tulloch, "the Church really rests." "To all thinking minds," said the Principal, in one of his most memorable speeches<sup>1</sup> (and he never spoke more wisely and well than when speaking on this theme of the national maintenance of that which he regarded as the symbol and embodiment of the national faith and righteousness)—"To all thinking minds a National Church is far more than a mere aggregation of endowed churches. It is an organization of the spiritual life of the nation—an institution created by the nation, and existing for its sake, embodying the great thought that religion is not merely a private, but a public concern—that the civil aspect of society is merely one aspect of our national life inextricably intertwined with the higher religious aspect, which deserves recognition, organization, and support, no less than the other. This alone makes a National Church in the true sense; and is the idea which really lies at the roots both of the Church of England and of the Church of Scotland. It is the converse of the sectarian idea upon which dissenting churches are built. It is higher than any mere principle of endowment, and alone clothes that principle with life and dignity. . . . Every true national institution rests on an ideal, and not a merely material, basis. It is the embodiment of some higher thought which has established itself in our national history, because it has first dominated and inspired our national intelligence. In this sense alone are National Churches absolutely defensible; and their maintenance or their dissolution, in the end, will depend upon the conflict between the idea which they represent and the idea represented by dogmatic Voluntaryism (something entirely distinct from practical Christian voluntaryism), viz. that religion is a purely private concern, having no connection

<sup>1</sup> *Life* by Mrs. Oliphant, p. 421.

with an organized national life, and which ought to be entirely severed from the forms of that life."

This idea is one that will be searched for in vain among the principles formulated and maintained by those who reformed the Church of Scotland, who moulded her constitution, and who guided her policy in the past. It is one that will receive no encouragement from the "higher patriotic sentiments" of the present.

We believe that a study of these volumes will help to foster such sentiments, and to strengthen their hold upon all those minds which reverence the teachings of our history. We issue them, in the confident hope that they will be found interesting and instructive, not by churchmen only, but by every Scotsman who has a loyal respect for the noble traditions of his native land, and the memory of the good and faithful patriots, who have helped to assert the liberties and to elevate the character of its people.

It is with great regret that, as these pages are passing through the press, we receive the announcement of the death of our valued friend and contributor, the Rev. Dr. Edgar. He died, after a short illness, on the 24th March. Dr. Edgar was a faithful minister of the Church; and in his volumes on "Old Church Life in Scotland," and on the English Bible, made learned and highly useful additions to her literature.

R. H. S.

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# THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

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## BOOK I.

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### THE CHURCH FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO THE REIGN OF MALCOLM CANMORE.

BY

REV. JAMES CAMPBELL, D.D., F.S.A.,

AUTHOR OF "BALMERINO AND ITS ABBEY;" "MEDIÆVAL SCOTLAND;"  
"SCOTLAND'S OLDEST MONASTERY," &c., &c.



# THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

## PAST AND PRESENT.

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### BOOK I.

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO QUEEN MARGARET.

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### CHAPTER I.

Earliest names of the country and people—Julius Cæsar's invasion of Britain—Description of the natives by classical writers—Agricola's invasion—Battle of Mons Grampius—Hadrian's Wall—Wall of Antoninus—Invasion by the Emperor Severus—Earliest mention of the Picts and Scots—They ravage the Roman provinces—Are joined by the Saxons and Attacotti—Theodosius repels them—Abandonment of Britain by the Romans—Earliest native historians—Conquests by the Anglo-Saxons—Formation of four kingdoms in North Britain—The Pictish kingdom—Ethnology of the British Islands—The Picts not a Teutonic but a Celtic people—Their language Celtic—Kingdom of the Scots of Dalriada—Kingdom of the Strathclyde Britons—Anglic Kingdom of Northumbria—Arthur and his battles.

THE circumstances attending the first publication and subsequent progress of the Gospel in Scotland cannot well be understood without some acquaintance with the previous history of the country, the different races by which it was occupied, and their religious beliefs and practices. A rapid sketch of what is known of these subjects may therefore form a suitable introduction to the present work.

The authentic history of Scotland may be said to commence at the period of the Roman invasion. During long ages preceding that event our country was doubtless the theatre of many important occurrences. In the migrations and contests of barbarous tribes, and in their social customs and religious rites, there must have been abundant matter for interesting and instructive history. But without the knowledge of letters there was no effectual method of preserving from oblivion even

the most important transactions. The sepulchral cairn or pillar-stone might be raised in honour of a great warrior, or to mark the scene of a decisive victory; but in the lapse of ages names and events would be forgotten, and the time would come when such monuments would only excite, without satisfying, the curiosity of the beholder as to whom or what they were intended to commemorate. But the arrival of the Roman legions was the dawn of a new era. The native tribes, then brought into contact with a powerful and widely extended government, could not fail to be in some degree influenced by its higher civilization, nor could they longer remain in their former obscurity. From the history of Roman conquest in our country we obtain our first certain information concerning its people. That information is, indeed, vague and scanty. Classical authors only allude to the affairs of Britain incidentally, and in so far as they were connected with the great events of Roman history. The condition of an island so remote was not reckoned of sufficient importance to induce any of them to write a special account of it while it formed part of the empire. Yet from such references to it as can be gathered from their works we can make out the chief stages in the growth of Roman dominion in Britain, and learn somewhat of its influence on the native tribes. Before that dominion terminated an agency of a more elevating kind had been introduced by the preaching of the Gospel; and from notices of its early progress which occur in Christian authors the first glimmerings of a new light are shed on the country and its inhabitants.

The oldest name of the whole island appears to have been "Albion." The term "Britannia," which had been originally employed to designate the British Islands as a group, including Hibernia, Ierne,<sup>1</sup> or Ireland, was first applied by Julius Cæsar to the largest island exclusively. In course of time the use of the name Alba, Alban, or Albyn, which are evidently variations of Albion, if not earlier forms of the word, came to be restricted to North Britain, the inhabitants of which called themselves "Albannich." The country situated on the north of the Firths of Forth and Clyde is by Tacitus, and other classical authors both before and after him, termed "Caledonia." The word "Scotia,"

<sup>1</sup> Juvenal gives to Ireland the name "Juverna" ("Satires," ii. 160).

which originally signified Ireland, was not applied to North Britain till the tenth century.

Many ages before the Romans invaded Britain the island was known to the merchants of Phœnicia and of Marseilles, who came to Cornwall and the Scilly Islands, to procure tin and lead from the mines which were wrought there even at that early period. In the fifth century before the Christian era Herodotus incidentally mentions the Cassiterides, or Tin Islands; but the "Father of history" confesses at the same time his ignorance concerning them.<sup>1</sup> The only other authors before Cæsar's invasion who refer to Britain are Aristotle and Polybius, the former of whom merely mentions the very large islands Albion and Ierne, and some smaller ones around them, while the latter alludes to the working of tin in the "Bretannic" Islands.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest visit to Britain of which an account has come down to us is that of Julius Cæsar, as narrated by himself in his "Commentaries." It was in the year 55 B.C. that Cæsar landed a Roman army somewhere near Deal in Kent. His first campaign was of brief duration, and was mainly exploratory. In less than three weeks he returned to the Continent, but made a more extensive invasion in the following year. It is evident from Cæsar's own account, as well as from that of other classical authors, that he accomplished very little towards the subjugation of the island. His military operations were confined to the southern districts, and do not specially concern us here; but his description of the native tribes possesses a peculiar interest. The inhabitants of the interior of the island, he tells us, were believed to be indigenous; but those of the maritime parts had crossed over from Belgium for the purpose of getting plunder or making war; and most of them called their settlements in Britain after the names of the states from which they had sprung. The population was crowded; their dwellings were

<sup>1</sup> In a Greek poem on the Argonautic expedition by Onomacritus, attributed to Orpheus, the British Islands are called the Iernian Islands, in lines which have been thus translated:—

"Should I approach Iernian isles too near,  
Danger and dread calamity I fear."

—"*Monumenta Historica Britannica*" (1848), 49.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, iii. 115; Aristotle, "De Mundo," iii.; Polybius, "Hist.," iii. 57; Diodorus Siculus, i. 4; Strabo, "Geogr.," iii.; Pliny, "Nat. Hist." ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," i.—viii.)



numerous, and similar to those in Gaul. They possessed a great number of cattle. They used for money either bronze or ingots of iron, adjusted to a certain weight. Tin was produced in the island, iron in the maritime districts; bronze was imported. They held it unlawful to eat the hare, the hen, or the goose; but reared them for amusement or pleasure. The inhabitants of Kent were the most civilized, and their customs differed but little from those of the Gauls. The people of the interior did not sow corn, but fed on milk and flesh, and were clothed in skins. All the Britons stained their bodies with woad, which gave them a bluish colour, and a more terrible aspect in battle. They wore lengthy locks, and shaved the face with the exception of the upper lip. They had community of wives. In battle they fought from chariots, which they guided with marvellous dexterity, putting the Roman soldiers in terror, and spreading confusion in their ranks.<sup>1</sup>

To nearly the same period belong the writings of Strabo and Diodorus Siculus, which supply us with other particulars of interest concerning the Britons. Strabo informs us that the men surpassed the Gauls in stature, had hair of a less yellow colour, and were slighter in their persons. He himself had seen at Rome young Britons who surpassed the tallest men there by half a foot; but they were distorted in their lower limbs, and in other respects not symmetrically formed. Some of the people were like the Gauls; others were more barbarous, and did not know how to make cheese, though they had abundance of milk; and were ignorant of gardening and tillage. Forests were their cities. Having inclosed an ample space with felled trees, they made within this temporary huts for themselves and their cattle. Of the adjacent islands, Hibernia was inhabited by a people who were more rustic than the natives of Britain, and were addicted to cannibalism and other shocking practices—thinking it an honour to consume even the bodies of their deceased friends—though Strabo confesses that for these things there was not sufficient evidence. Of all the islands the most northerly was Thule, the accounts of which, he says, were vague by reason of its secluded situation. He and also subsequent writers describe the climate of Britain as all of us know it too

<sup>1</sup> Cæsar, "De Bell. Gall." iv. 22. &c., v. 8, &c.; Tacitus, "Agric. Vit." xiii.



well. Diodorus informs us that the aboriginal tribes had mean habitations, constructed for the most part of reeds or of wood. They gathered in the harvest by cutting off the ears of the corn, and storing them in subterranean repositories. They had many kings and princes, and usually lived together in peace. Those who dwelt near the promontory of Belerion (Land's End) were very fond of strangers, and, owing to their intercourse with foreign merchants, were more civilized in their habits.<sup>1</sup>

After Cæsar withdrew his forces scarcely anything is known of events in Britain for nearly a century. It was not till the year 43 of the Christian era that strenuous efforts were put forth for the conquest of the island and its annexation to the empire. Aulus Plautius was the first general sent from Rome for this purpose. In a few years a considerable portion of the country was subdued by him and his successors. For his able management of the war in Britain Plautius obtained the honour of a triumph; and amongst those who fought and were slaughtered in the gladiatorial show on that occasion were many British captives. The subjugated districts of Britain were now formed into a Roman province. This was gradually enlarged by the acquisition of new territories, and other provinces were constituted at subsequent periods.<sup>2</sup>

Pomponius Mela, who flourished in the time of Claudius, gives us some additional information about the native tribes. They were all uncivilized, but the further they were removed from the Continent the more ignorant were they of every kind of wealth except cattle and territory. Alluding to their practice of staining their bodies, he says it was uncertain whether this was done for ornament or for some other reason. He describes the richness of the soil of Ireland and the savage customs of its people; and mentions the Orkney Islands and the Hebrides. Solinus, who wrote at a somewhat later period, tells us that Ireland was free of serpents—a state of matters which has been popularly ascribed to the supposed miraculous power of St. Patrick. The inhabitants of the Hebrides, he says, were ignorant of fruits, and lived exclusively on milk and flesh. They

<sup>1</sup> "Mon. Hist. Brit.," iii., vii.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, "*Agricola*," xiii., xiv.; Eutropius, vii. 13; Suetonius, "*Vespas.*" iv.; Dio Cassius ("*Mon. Hist. Brit.*" iv.)

all had one king, who was allowed to possess nothing of his own, lest avarice should turn him aside from the paths of justice and truth. He refers to the Orkney Islands as being destitute of inhabitants, and as having no woods, but only coarse herbage. Thule, on the other hand, had an abundant produce. Its inhabitants lived during early spring on fodder amongst their cattle; at a later season on milk. They stored up the fruits of the trees against the necessities of winter. Settled marriage was unknown amongst them.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 78, when the Roman conquests appear to have extended northwards as far as the boundary which now separates England from Scotland, Agricola, a distinguished officer, arrived in Britain in the capacity of general-in-chief. His campaigns are minutely described by his son-in-law, Tacitus, in a most interesting memoir of his life. This work occupies, in regard to North Britain, a position similar to that held by Caesar's "Commentaries" with reference to the southern portion of the island. It is the first account of an actual visit made to Scotland which we possess; and if the Roman generals who subsequently conducted military operations in our country had enjoyed the advantage of having their deeds recorded by such a historian as Tacitus, our knowledge of the native races would be vastly greater than it is. Agricola, having in his first campaign quelled an insurrection of the Ordovices, and reduced the island of Mona, or Anglesey, appears to have spent the following summer in overrunning the districts of Lancashire and Cumberland, and probably Galloway. In the year 80, and in his third campaign, he advanced to the Firth of Tay, having crossed the Forth, apparently near Stirling, and proceeded thence by Strathallan and lower Strathearn to Perth. He now constructed fortifications for the defence of the district thus occupied; and the headquarters of his army may have been the camp at Ardoch, which presents, even in its present condition, an impressive illustration of Roman power and persistence.<sup>2</sup> In the summer of 81, observing that the Firths of Forth and Clyde approached so near to each other as to render the

<sup>1</sup> Pomponius Mela, "De Situ Orbis," iii. 6; Solinus, "Polyhistoriæ," 22 ("Mon. Hist. Brit." vii. x.)

<sup>2</sup> See Roy's "Military Antiquities," p. 126, and Plate xxx.; and Stewart's "Caledonia Romana," second edition, p. 192, and Plate v.

country situated on the north of them almost a separate island, he constructed a line of forts to connect these two arms of the sea, rightly judging that this line would be the most easily defended as a frontier. Instead of confining his troops, however, within this boundary, and there receiving the assaults of the enemy, Agricola carried the war into the territory beyond it, which evidently he also wished to explore. But he first made a survey of the western districts of the country. This took place during the summer of the year 82, when he is said to have penetrated into regions before unknown, and to have fought many and successful battles with the natives. It is not easy to determine the precise scene of his operations. As he appears to have obtained a view of the coast of Ireland, the choice seems to lie between Galloway, Ayrshire, and Kintyre, from all of which Ireland is visible. Agricola received with a show of friendship an Irish chief who had been expelled from his own country; and, apparently on this person's authority, he had often told his biographer that Ireland could have been conquered and held by one legion and a small force of auxiliaries.

Retracing his steps, Agricola during the following summer brought his army across the Firth of Forth and occupied Fife, while his fleet sailed round the coast of that peninsula and entered the Firth of Tay, causing great consternation amongst the Caledonians. Passing over the details of his subsequent operations, we may specially notice the celebrated battle of Mons Grampius, which was fought in the year 86, and the identification of whose site has proved so fruitful a subject of antiquarian controversy. The Caledonian tribes, united in a powerful confederacy under Calgacus their chief, mustered on this occasion a force of 30,000 men, hoping by one supreme effort to annihilate the foreign invaders of their country. But the discipline of the Roman troops achieved a decisive victory; and if we can trust the accuracy of the historian, whose chief object was to magnify the fame of Agricola, 10,000 of the Caledonians were slain, while the loss of their opponents was trifling. Notwithstanding this victory, Agricola, appreciating, doubtless, the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of subduing the warlike tribes of the north, whose mountainous territory

rendered them practically inaccessible, made no attempt to penetrate further into the country. He withdrew his forces into the territory of the Horesti, which was apparently the district situated between the Tay and the Forth, and soon after retired into winter quarters south of the Forth and Clyde. About the same time he ordered his fleet to circumnavigate the country, whose insular character was thereby clearly established. Tacitus says that this naval force discovered and subdued the Orkney Islands, till that time unknown, and got a sight of Thule—probably some far-off member of the group which they supposed to be the identical region so named.<sup>1</sup> But according to other historians<sup>2</sup> the Orkney Islands had been previously added to the Roman dominions by the Emperor Claudius, though any subjugation by either of them must have been more nominal than real. When the tidings of Agricola's great victory over the Caledonians reached Rome, he was recalled by Domitian, who had his own reasons for cutting short the too successful career of his general, and the Caledonian tribes were for some time left unmolested.

From the narrative of Tacitus we obtain various interesting facts and opinions concerning Britain and its people, acquired during Agricola's campaign. As to the question of race, the red hair and large limbs of the Caledonians, he thinks, proved that they were of German descent. The darker complexion and curled hair of the Silurians rendered it probable that the ancient Iberians had crossed the sea from Spain and occupied these settlements. Those who resided in that part of the country nearest to Gaul resembled its inhabitants. Nevertheless, viewing the nationality of the Britons as a whole, it was probable that they had come from Gaul. In several particulars they resembled the people of that country. In language they did not differ much. They showed the same audacity in provoking danger, and the same pusillanimity in declining it when it occurred. In war they relied chiefly on their infantry; but some nations fought also in chariots. They were divided into various states or tribes; and to so great an

<sup>1</sup> "Inveniet vasto surgentem vertice Thulen."

—*Rufus Festus Avienus* ("Mon. Hist. Brit." xix.)

<sup>2</sup> *Eutropius*, vii. 13; *Orosius* ("Mon. Hist. Brit." lxxii., lxxix.)



extent were they swayed by the influence of rivalry and faction, that two or three tribes would hardly unite to ward off a common danger. This spirit of disunion was favourable to the success of the Roman arms; fighting singly, the tribes were conquered successively.<sup>1</sup>

There is scarcely anything to record from the recall of Agricola till the year 120, when the Emperor Hadrian, having arrived in Britain, decided on withdrawing the boundary of the Roman territory to a line extending from the Tyne to the Solway. Here he constructed a stupendous work of defence against the inroads of the independent tribes—a wall 73 miles in length, with its accompanying ditch, and military stations and forts—thus abandoning for the time the territory which Agricola had gained for the empire, and acknowledging the formidable character of its assailants. In the year 139 the Roman general Lollius Urbicus threw up a wall of turf to connect the forts erected by Agricola between the Forth and Clyde, which has been commonly called the Wall of Antoninus, after the name of the reigning emperor, and, locally, Grime's Dyke. This was the result of a determination to reoccupy the more extended territory, and to defend it against incursions from the north. The line thus again fortified, though it was on several occasions passed by the Roman legions in their conflicts with the native tribes, was ever recognized as the true boundary of the province. Nevertheless the northern assailants passed the Wall of Antoninus in the year 182, when Commodus was emperor, and the war which he found it necessary to wage against them is described as the most dangerous of several which he had with foreign nations. The natives cut in pieces the Roman forces, with their commander; but were ultimately driven back by Marcellus Ulpus.<sup>2</sup>

A fresh invasion of Caledonia was, in the year 208, conducted by the Emperor Severus in person. The cause of his undertaking such an expedition was, that the native tribes had combined together in order to break existing treaties and to shake off the Roman yoke. The invasion was on so extensive a scale, and was conducted with such energy and determination, that it

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, "*Agricola*," xxii.—xxxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Spartian, *Julius Capitolinus*, *Xiphiline* ("Mon. Hist. Brit." lix., lxx.)

can only be compared with the operations of Agricola in the same territory. According to Xiphiline, who, in his abridgment of the History of Dio Cassius, describes this expedition, the northern tribes were now united under the two greatest of them, the Caledonii and the Mæatæ. The latter dwelt near the great wall—apparently that between the Forth and the Clyde—in desert, marshy plains; the former occupied the country beyond them, consisting of mountains strangely described as not only wild, but waterless—a division corresponding to the modern Lowlands and Highlands. They had neither walls, nor cities, nor cultivated lands; but subsisted by pasturage, by the chase, and on certain berries. Though they had an inexhaustible supply of fish, they never ate them. They lived in tents, naked and barefooted. They had wives in common, and reared their children as the offspring of the community. They delighted in pillage. They still fought both from chariots drawn by small swift horses, and on foot. They were very fleet in running, and most resolute when compelled to stand and face the enemy. Their arms were a shield, a sword, and a short spear having a brazen knob at the extremity of the shaft, which they shook in order to terrify the enemy by its noise. They were capable of enduring hunger, thirst, and hardships of every description; and the incredible statement is added, that when plunged in the marshes they could abide there many days, with their heads only out of the water. In the woods they subsisted on bark and roots, and prepared for all emergencies a certain kind of food, of which, if they ate only so much as the size of a bean, they felt neither hunger nor thirst. We further learn from Herodian, a contemporary historian, that the natives punctured their bodies with pictured forms of every sort of animals, and that the reason why they wore no clothing was, that the figures on their bodies might not be concealed.<sup>1</sup>

Such being the character and habits of the people—and in respect of these there is no distinction indicated between the two great divisions in which the tribes were ranged—Severus, we are further told by Xiphiline, being anxious to subjugate the whole country, advanced into Caledonia. In his progress

<sup>1</sup> Herodian ("Mon. Hist. Brit." lxiii.)

he underwent indescribable labour in cutting down woods, levelling hills, making causeways through marshes, and building bridges over rivers—statements which show how great difficulties the Roman army must have encountered in traversing a country no small portion of which consisted of marshes and jungle. During this expedition Severus fought no battle, nor did he see any army in array; yet by ambuscades and other devices of the enemy, and by the hardships of the route, he lost 50,000 of his men. Still he persevered, till he reached what he thought was the extremity of the island, where he carefully examined the parallax of the sun, and the length of the days both in summer and winter. During the greater part of the expedition he was in so infirm a state of health that he had to be carried in a covered litter. Returning to the friendly part of the country, he compelled the native tribes to enter into a treaty, whereby they yielded up no small portion of their territory, which must have consisted of districts situated north of the Wall of Antoninus.<sup>1</sup>

Remains of camps and Roman roads which existed till modern times prove that Severus must have proceeded as far as the Moray Firth, which he probably considered to be the extremity of the island. He was not singular amongst his countrymen in having his curiosity excited by the great length of the days of the northern summer, and of the nights in winter. Many of the historians of Roman operations in Britain mention these things as remarkable, and also the ebb and flow of the tides around our coasts, which are scarcely perceptible on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Severus has been generally credited with the erection of the wall between the Tyne and the Solway; but recent explorations of its remains have proved that this opinion is erroneous, and that both the design of the wall and the execution of, at least, the greater part of it are due to the Emperor Hadrian. Severus, however, appears to have reconstructed the Wall of Antoninus connecting the Forth and the Clyde, which many authors have confounded with the southern rampart.

Any effect produced on the Caledonians and Mæatæ by

<sup>1</sup> Xiphiline; Herodian ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," lx.—lxv.); Nennius, xix. (*Ibid.* 60).



the expedition which this emperor conducted so far into their territory was only temporary. They soon again revolted, and Severus was about to enter upon a new war with them when he had to meet and was vanquished by another enemy. He died at York in the year 211.<sup>1</sup>

There is now again a long interval during which little is known of the history of our country. In the reign of Diocletian, and the year 287, Carausius was sent to Britain in order to defend it against the ravages of two continental nations of barbarians, the Franks and the Saxons, who then for the first time appeared on its coasts. Carausius, however, usurped the supreme power in Britain. According to Nennius, he rebuilt the wall between the Forth and Clyde, and strengthened it by the erection of seven forts; he also constructed of polished stones the round house on the banks of the Carron, afterwards called Arthur's Oon. When Carausius had maintained his usurpation for seven years he was assassinated by Allectus, who, following the example of his predecessor, also seized the reins of government. Both of these generals appear to have been supported in the course which they thus pursued by the native tribes. After ruling three years—Britain having been thus, for ten years, altogether independent of Rome—Allectus was in his turn slain, in the year 294, by Constantius Chlorus; and the tribes of North Britain, who are now called "Caledonians and other Picts"—the latter name occurring in 296 for the first time<sup>2</sup>—again revolted. In the year 306 Constantius Chlorus, as Emperor of the West, marched an army into the territory situated north of the wall, and defeated the Caledonians and their confederates. This Constantius was the father of Constantine the Great by his wife Helena, who was not a Briton, though commonly said to have been the daughter of a British innkeeper; and on his death at York in the following year Constantine was hailed as Augustus of the West by the acclamations of the army in Britain.<sup>3</sup>

For a lengthened period after this there is little recorded of the affairs of the island. In the year 360 the Picts from the

<sup>1</sup> Niphiline ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," lxi.)

<sup>2</sup> Eumenii "Panegy. Constan. August.," cc. 7, 8 ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," lxi.)

<sup>3</sup> Orosius; Eutropius; *Extracta Panegy. Veter.* ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," lxxviii., lxxix., lxxii., lxxx.); Nennius, xix. (*Ibid.* 60).

north and the Scots from the west—the latter being then mentioned for the first time—wasted the districts nearest to the Roman frontier, and appear to have even advanced southwards as far as Hadrian's Wall, whereby the provincials were greatly alarmed. Julian, who had lately been made Cæsar, but was not yet Emperor, was then spending the winter in Paris; and judging it inexpedient that he himself, in the existing condition of Gaul—exposed as it was to attacks from Germany—should proceed to Britain, he sent Lupicinus to repel the invaders. This general was, however, soon recalled. The Picts and the Scots still held possession of the territory they had overrun, and were in the year 364 joined by two other nations, the Saxons and the Attacotti,<sup>1</sup> by whom Roman Britain was now ravaged on all sides. The Saxons came from the coasts of Germany; and the Attacotti are believed to have inhabited part of the territory between the two walls. The Picts are at this time described as consisting of two nations, the Dicalledones and the Vecturiones. Theodosius the elder, father of the future emperor of that name, was at length sent to repel this new invasion. Crossing from Boulogne to Richborough, and having collected his forces, he marched towards London—then described as an ancient town, which was afterwards called Augusta—and, charging the enemy as they were loading themselves with pillage and driving their prisoners before them, he quickly routed them and recovered the booty. He succeeded also in compelling the Picts to return to their own country, and the Scots to Ireland, whence they had come. The Saxons appear to have sought refuge in Orkney. Theodosius also rebuilt the ruined cities, and restored the stations on the Wall of Antoninus; and out of the territory recovered from the enemy formed a new province, which he named Valentia, in honour of the Emperor Valens. Valentia is commonly understood to have embraced the districts between the walls.<sup>2</sup>

The security thus recovered by the Romanized Britons was of short duration. In the year 383 Maximus, another adven-

<sup>1</sup> St. Jerome asserts that when a young man in Gaul, he saw the Attacotti, a British nation, feeding on human flesh—a most improbable charge. See Pinkerton's "Enquiry," ii. 144; Skene's "Celtic Scotland," i. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," lxxiii., lxxiv.)

turer, having gained over the army in Britain, was proclaimed emperor. When he had repelled the attacks of the Picts and Scots, he led his troops into Gaul and Italy; and, having slain the Emperor Gratian, held his ground till the year 388, when he himself was slain.<sup>1</sup> Roman Britain was thus left defenceless against the renewed incursions of the Picts and Scots; and, in answer to the entreaty of the islanders, Stilicho, the minister of the Emperor Honorius, sent in the year 400 a legion to their assistance, and the invaders were driven beyond the northern wall. The legion was, however, soon recalled for the protection of the heart of the empire against Alaric, and the Roman territory in Britain was again assailed by the Picts and Scots. Stilicho, now perceiving that the imperial dominion in the island was in the utmost danger, sent three legions to the help of the Britons. Peace was thus again restored for a time; but during the troubles which now threatened the very existence of the Roman Empire—for the vultures were gathering round the carcase—the legions in Britain being left to themselves, and sharing in the fears entertained by the other inhabitants of the island, that the Vandals would cross the sea and subdue them also, revolted from their obedience to Honorius, and proclaimed Marcus as Emperor; but they soon put him to death, and elevated in his room one Gratian, who was a native of Britain. Within four months they put him also to death, and conferred the sovereignty upon one Constantine solely on account of his name, which they looked upon as an omen of good fortune, hoping he would do as much as Constantine the Great had done, who had been advanced to the imperial dignity in the island. This new prince, immediately after his elevation, passed over into Gaul, in the year 406, in order to obtain for himself the throne of the Cæsars; and, taking with him the flower of the British youth, so exhausted the military force of the island that it was left wholly exposed to its invaders. The remainder of Constantine's life was spent out of Britain. In order that the provincials might be the more able to defend themselves against their assailants, Constantine, before his departure, recommended that they should withdraw the frontier

<sup>1</sup> Aurelius Victor ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," lxxii.); Prosper of Aquitaine. "Chron." ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," lxxxii.)

to the southern wall, and abandon all the territory beyond it. Thus the Roman army left Britain never to return. Very soon thereafter—in the year 409—the Picts, Scots, and Saxons occupied the country up to the southern wall. In the following year the Emperor Honorius wrote a letter to the cities of Britain informing them that for their defence in future they must depend on their own resources.<sup>1</sup> Their connection with the Empire being thus finally severed, the Britons first attacked and, for the time, repelled their assailants, and then proceeded to overthrow the civil government of the Romans in the island. Thus terminated the Roman dominion in Britain, which had continued for more than four centuries and a half, reckoned from the first landing of Julius Cæsar on its shores.

From the foregoing sketch—necessarily brief as it is—of the Roman occupation of Britain, it is evident that the supremacy of a foreign military power for a period so lengthened had the usual effect of greatly enfeebling those native tribes who had been subjected to it. At first they fought for their independence with the utmost bravery, and the result of the contest seemed doubtful. But from the time when South Britain was effectually subjugated, its inhabitants appear to have gradually lost their intrepidity of spirit, and to have sunk into a state of effeminacy. The frequent applications which were latterly sent to Rome for assistance to repel the inroads of the northern tribes prove how much terror these inspired among a helpless people. From their conquerors they, indeed, learned the habits and appliances of civilization, and in this respect there was a marked contrast between them and the tribes of the north. But this advantage scarcely compensated them for the feeble and spiritless condition into which they had fallen. The inhabitants of the territory between the Tyne and the northern wall also must have been partially civilized by the presence amongst them of the Roman army, as well as by the influence of municipal institutions; and on several occasions considerable bodies of the natives appear to have been enrolled in the imperial legions, and even to have been sent to the Continent on active

<sup>1</sup> Olympiodorus; Zosimus ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," lxxv.—lxxix.); Gildas, § 13 *et seq.*; Nennius, § 12 *et seq.*; Bede, "Ecc. Hist.," bk. i. chap. 12.



service.<sup>1</sup> But the tribes situated north of the Forth and Clyde retained their rude manners and bravery along with their freedom. Such invasions of portions of their territory as they had to submit to produced no permanent effect on their warlike character. No treaty or truce with their assailants could long restrain them, and no temporary defeat could stop their incursions into the Roman provinces. A striking proof of their intrepidity is furnished by the memorable incident of their making their appearance on one occasion so far south as London. Yet even the northern tribes must have made some advances in civilization during the long centuries of the existence of the Roman dominion so near them. One instance of this is to be seen in the consolidation of the tribes, and in their gradual progress towards unity of government. But to the last they maintained their independence; and to the tide of conquest which, issuing from the banks of the Tiber, swept over so many countries, the mountains of Caledonia and the intrepid character of its people presented an effectual and permanent barrier.

Of the events which took place in Britain during a century and a half after the termination of the Roman government in it our knowledge is very imperfect. Classical writers no longer concerned themselves with the affairs of an island which had ceased to form part of the empire; and native historians had not yet arisen. So ignorant of our country was Procopius, the most celebrated writer of the sixth century, that he speaks of it as composed of two islands, Brittia and Brettania, which lay from east to west. Brittia was nearest to the Continent, and opposite to the outlets of the Rhine. Three nations possessed it, the Angili, the Phrissones, and those named from the island itself, or the Brittones. Its inhabitants, he tells us, had never seen a horse, no such animal having ever existed in it. Long ago they had built a wall across the island. On the eastern side of this wall the climate was wholesome; the seasons were temperate; and the soil was fertile in fruits and corn. On the western side of the wall—by which he means the districts situated north of the Firths of the Forth and Clyde—

<sup>1</sup> The province of Bretagne is said to have been founded by a body of Britons who, having been enrolled in the Roman army, never returned to their own country.

neither man nor beast could live, the place being infested with serpents and wild beasts, and the atmosphere unwholesome. The natives, he says, affirmed that the souls of the departed were always conducted thither from the opposite coast of the Continent; and he tells the following wonderful story of the manner in which this was done, though he does not vouch for its entire truth. Those on whom, in their turn, the duty devolved were summoned at night from their beds by a voice, and impelled by some mysterious influence to proceed to the shore. Here they found vessels in readiness, but with no men in them. Embarking in these, they laid hold of the oars, and felt their burden made heavier by a multitude of departed souls as passengers, so that the boats scarcely floated a finger's breadth above the water. When they had rowed for one hour only they arrived at Brittia, though in ordinary circumstances the passage occupied a night and a day. Having reached the island, and been released from their burden, they immediately departed, their boats sinking in the water no deeper than the keel. All this time they saw no human being; but they heard a voice, which announced to those who received the souls the names and titles of all who had crossed over with them.<sup>1</sup> Brettania, which lay on the west of Brittia, and was a separate island, was really the country south of the Humber.

Our earliest British historians are Gildas, Nennius, and Bede. Of Gildas little is known with certainty. The events of his life are so perplexing that some have erroneously concluded that there were two persons of that name. He was born most probably at Alclwyd (Arecluta), or Dunbarton, in the year 516. He was one of the founders of monachism in Wales, and is said to have restored the Christian faith in Ireland when it had declined after the death of St. Patrick. The Irish Church of the seventh century held him only second to that evangelist. It would appear that he wrote his history, "Concerning the Destruction of Britain," about the year 560 at the monastery of Ruys, in Armorica, which he had founded, and where, according to one account, he died in 570. His narrative is meagre of historical incidents, and its chronology is confused. The work

<sup>1</sup> Extract from Procopius in Giles' "History of the Ancient Britons, and Historical Documents concerning them," i. 398-405; ii. 199-205.

is mainly a querulous and declamatory invective against the degeneracy of the British Church and the vices of the princes and people of the land, and abounds in lengthy quotations from Scripture. Yet it occupies a unique position as the first history of Britain, written by a native, which we possess. Many of the author's statements regarding the abandonment of the island by the Romans are inconsistent with those of Roman writers; but his History subsequent to that period has been adopted by Bede and almost all others as the basis of the early English annals.

Of Nennius even less is known than of Gildas. The "History of the Britons" which goes under his name, and of which he appears to have written only a portion, has been assigned to various dates from the early part of the seventh to the middle of the ninth century. The text of the work is very corrupt, and has received many interpolations and additions. Its dates and materials are confused and contradictory.

Bede, surnamed the Venerable, a monk of Jarrow, and probably the most learned man of his time, was born in 673, and died in 735. His "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation," for which he laboriously collected materials, is characterized by fidelity and candour, and is written in a clear and unaffected style; and notwithstanding his credulity in regard to alleged miraculous incidents—a quality too common in monkish writers—is exceedingly valuable and interesting, and is the source of almost all our knowledge of the subject of which it treats, down to the year 731, when it terminates.

From the vague traditions which have come down to us concerning the period following the departure of the Romans from Britain, it appears to have been a time of great confusion, during which the Romanized Britons, the independent native tribes, and foreign adventurers all contended for the supremacy which the Romans had relinquished. When the light of history again shines upon our country—in the latter half of the sixth century—the position of the various races within it is found to be greatly changed. The Jutes, Saxons, and Angles have obtained possession of the whole island south



of the Firths of Forth and Clyde, with the exception of certain detached, and, for the most part, mountainous, territories along its western coast, to which the Britons are now confined. These territories are Cornwall, Wales, Cumbria, and the district extending from the Solway to the Clyde. The Scots from the north of Ireland occupy what is now Argyllshire; and the Picts retain the remainder of North Britain beyond the Firths of Clyde and Forth. Within the boundaries of Scotland as defined in modern times, with the addition of certain portions of the north of England, four kingdoms maintain a separate existence. These now claim a brief notice. The most extensive and important of them is the Pictish kingdom.

The origin of the PICTS, and the language spoken by them—questions which are closely connected—have been the subject of much discussion. Some have maintained that they were a Teutonic race; while those who hold they were of Celtic derivation are divided in opinion as to whether they belonged to the Cymric or Gaelic type of that family. The controversy might, indeed, never have been raised if there had come down to us any document emanating from a Pictish source, and written in the language of that people. But none such exists, the “Pictish Chronicle,” which is supposed to belong to the tenth century, being written in Latin. An amusing and truthful, albeit fictitious, illustration of the temper in which this subject was at one time discussed is furnished by the well-known encounter between the Laird of Monkbarns and the Baronet of Knockwinnoch in “The Antiquary.” “There are some topics,” says Mr. Burton, “which the temper and reason of the human race seem not to have been made strong enough to encounter, so invariably do these break down when the topics in question are started. Of such is the question, To which of the great classes of European languages did that of the people called Picts belong? The contest, like a duel with revolvers over a table, has been rendered more awful by the narrowness of the field of battle, since some time ago the world just possessed one word, or piece of a word, said to be Pictish, and now one of the most accomplished antiquaries of our day has added another.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “The Scot Abroad,” i. 4.

This, however, is a somewhat exaggerated statement of the case, as the materials for deciding the matter in dispute are not quite so scanty as it represents them to be.<sup>1</sup> There is now a decided preponderance of opinion on one side of the question, which, indeed, may be considered as at length virtually settled. In stating the result at which the ablest inquirers have arrived it will be necessary to extend our view beyond the Picts and their territory.

Archæologists concur in the belief that about the commencement of the Christian era the inhabitants of the British Islands were of two distinct races. One of these, and the first to arrive, was composed of people small in stature, with dark complexion and curly hair, who resembled the Iberians of the Basque provinces of Spain, from which they were supposed to have come. To this race belonged the tin-workers of Cornwall and the Scilly Islands, the Silures of South Wales, and the people called Firbolg, who were the original inhabitants of Ireland, and are believed to be still represented by a portion of its occupants. This Iberian race was, however, not confined to the places mentioned, but extended over the whole British Islands, and even over other parts of Europe. They have been identified as the people whose remains have been found in caves, long barrows, and chambered tombs, and who lived during what is called the Stone Age, characterized by the absence of metal implements, and by the use of such as were made of stone and flint.<sup>2</sup>

The Iberian race had been followed by another, of fair complexion and large-limbed, who used implements and vessels of bronze, and were the prevailing inhabitants of the country during the Bronze Age. This was the Celtic race, which, like the people who preceded it, spread over the British Islands, and was itself divided into distinct branches. One branch was the Gaelic, of which there were two subdivisions. The

<sup>1</sup> The "piece of a word" referred to by Burton—the only Pictish word known in Sir Walter Scott's time—is the first syllable of Peanfahel, the name of a place situated at the eastern extremity of the Roman Wall, near Abercorn. Bede says that the Angles called it Penneltun. Nennius names it Pengual, and says that it was called in Scotie, that is, Gaelic, Cenail. It is probably the place now called Walton. Other Pictish words now known are Ur, Scolofth, Cartit, Duiper. See Bede, lib. i. cap. xii.; "Celtic Scotland," i. 218; Forbes' edition of "Joecline's Life of Ninian," 277.

<sup>2</sup> See Wilson's "Archæology," introduction; Skene's "Celtic Scotland," vol. i. bk. i. ch. iv.

first consisted of those having red hair, whom the Romans considered indigenous—a word which we may understand as indicating a very early settlement—and who from the end of the third century were called Picts. Their Irish representatives were the Cruithnigh, who preceded the Scots in the possession of Ulster, but were afterwards confined within a district of it named Dalaradia. The second subdivision of the Gaelic people were dark-haired, and are described in the Irish legends as the race of Milesius, afterwards known as the Scots. To this variety belong also the inhabitants of the Isle of Man. The other great branch of the Celtic race consisted of those whom Roman writers name Britons, and describe as resembling the people of Gaul. They prevailed over the whole of the Roman territory as far as the northern wall. Their modern representatives are the Welsh, the Cornish, and the inhabitants of Brittany.<sup>1</sup>

Reverting to the Picts, with whom we are at present concerned, the statements of our earliest British historians regarding this people are discordant. Gildas calls them a transmarine nation which came from the north; and he first notices them as uniting with the Scots in invading the Roman territory, after Maximus had withdrawn his forces from Britain to the Continent. He further informs us that when, along with the Scots and Saxons, the Picts occupied the territory up to the southern wall, on its abandonment by the Britons, and were subsequently driven out of it, they then for the first time settled down in the extreme part of the island, where they afterwards remained, ever plundering and ravaging. Nennius, on the other hand, assigns their settlement in Britain, which, according to him, commenced by their taking possession of Orkney, to the fourth century before the Christian era. According to Bede, this island had at first the Britons only as its inhabitants, and from them it derived its name. When they, beginning at the south, had got possession of the greatest part of it, the Picts came from Scythia, first to Ireland; but, on the Scots there refusing them a settlement, they crossed over to Britain, and began to inhabit the northern parts of the island.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Wilson's "Archæology," introduction; Skene's "Celtic Scotland," vol. i. bk. i. ch. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Gildas, § 15–21; Nennius, § 12 (Giles' edition); Bede, "Eccl. Hist." bk. i. ch. i.

From the manner in which the Picts are referred to by Roman authors, it is evident that this word is employed by them to designate the whole of the tribes situated on the north of the Firths of Forth and Clyde. The name was most probably derived from their practice of painting their bodies. Though this custom also prevailed among the inhabitants of South Britain, as appears from Cæsar's description of them, they seem to have abandoned it after they had been brought under the influence of Roman civilization. The northern tribes, who still continued the practice, would then come to be fitly named the *Picti*, or painted people, as in this respect differing from those of the south. When Tacitus characterizes the tribes with which Agricola contended in his advance towards the Tay as "new nations," he clearly regards them as a people distinct from the inhabitants of South Britain, though the difference may not have been, as he seems to have supposed, so great as to be incompatible with a common Celtic origin. They appear to have been divided into many tribes. In the time of the Emperor Hadrian the number of these, extending from the Solway to the northern extremity of the island, was, according to Ptolemy, fourteen. The presence of a common danger first induced the tribes to form themselves into a confederacy. Thus they were united under Calgacus in order more effectually to resist Agricola's invasion; and in the time of Severus, as we have seen, all the tribes were ranged under the two leading ones, the Caledonii and the Mæatæ. This twofold arrangement seems to have been continued amongst the Picts throughout their subsequent history. In the year 360 they were divided into the Dicaledones—evidently the Caledonians under a cognate name—and the Vecturiones, who were probably the still independent portion of the Mæatæ after a part of the territory of the latter, on the north side of the wall, had been ceded to the Romans in the time of Severus. Bede also, writing in the eighth century, describes the northern as separated from the southern Picts by lofty mountains—those now called the Grampians—though the two divisions formed one kingdom.

The capital of the Pictish kingdom was not always the same, but was sometimes situated on the north, and at other times on the south of the Grampians. In St. Columba's time it was



near Inverness, where King Brude reigned. His successor, Gartnaidh, had his capital at Abernethy, on the river Earn. The Pictish territory embraced seven provinces:—Angus and Mearns; Athole and Gowrie; Strathearn and Menteith; Fife and Forthreave, or the district between Forth and the Tay; Mar and Buchan; Moray and Ross; and Caithness, which included Sutherland. The Pictish monarchy descended by the female, not the male line, and the son of the previous king was excluded.<sup>1</sup> It appears that outside of their own peculiar territory the Picts also occupied a district in Lothian, and that from them the Pictland Hills—now by corruption called Pentlands—derived their name, just as the Pichtland is now called the Pentland Firth. They were, moreover, in possession of Galloway, which they had seized and retained after the departure of the Romans, and whose inhabitants are called Picts so late as the twelfth century, but were long under the rule of the Angles of Northumbria.

In determining the question of the nationality of the Picts, great weight ought to be given to the belief entertained by themselves. According to ancient Pictish traditions, the Cymry, or Britons, and the Gaels were derived from a common stock; and the Picts and Scots were both of the Gaelic race. The Welsh and Irish traditions and legends point unmistakably to the same conclusion, which we may therefore, as well as on other grounds, hold to be the correct one. The Celtic nationality of the Picts almost necessarily leads to the inference that a Celtic language was spoken by them. Yet it is an undoubted and interesting fact—explain it how we may—that, as far back as can be traced, a pure Saxon dialect, now called “broad Scotch,” has been spoken on the north-eastern seaboard, and throughout the Lowlands of Scotland anciently occupied by the Picts. This fact has been strenuously urged in favour of the opinion that the Picts were of Teutonic origin, and spoke a Teutonic language. The advocates of this theory also adduce the circumstance already referred to, that Tacitus assigns a German origin to the Caledonians, who were certainly Picts. But he founds this opinion not on the language spoken by the Caledonians, but on their bodily form and features; and it is

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton's “Enquiry,” ii. 143; Skene's “Celtic Scotland,” i. 28.

now well understood among ethnologists that in these respects the Germans did not materially differ from the Celts. Further, in only a part of the Pictish territory has a Teutonic language been spoken from a remote period: Gaelic has prevailed in the Highland districts as far back as the use of broad Scotch can be traced in the Lowlands; and while the Roman historians inform us that the inhabitants of Caledonia were divided into tribes, they appear to regard them as being all of one race, and give no hint of the existence of a diversity of language amongst them. The upholders of a Teutonic origin and language as characterizing the Picts also lay stress on the fact that St. Columba, according to his biographer Adamnan, made use of an interpreter in his intercourse with the Northern Picts; and they infer from this, that the language of that people must have been different from the Irish Gaelic spoken by Columba. But if he did use an interpreter on certain occasions—and only two such are mentioned, connected with his preaching of the Gospel—he appears to have experienced no difficulty in communicating with the Picts at other times without an interpreter. A small dialectic difference between his language and theirs—such as is often found to exist in different districts where the same tongue is spoken—would sufficiently account for Columba's using an interpreter in special circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

The arguments adduced in favour of the Teutonic character of the Pictish tongue are thus easily disposed of. There is the highest degree of probability—virtually amounting to certainty—that the ancient Caledonians, afterwards called Picts, from the date of their earliest settlement in our country spoke a dialect of the Gaelic variety of the Celtic language, and that thus there was no obstacle at a subsequent period to prevent the Pictish and Gaelic tongues merging into one. This conclusion is strongly corroborated by the fact that the dialect spoken by the Picts of Galloway, even down to the sixteenth century, was Gaelic. The charters appended to the Book of Deer show that the Picts of Buchan were cognate with the rest of the Celtic family in respect of their laws, names, and language. The few remains of the Pictish language which survive in names of persons and places, and other words preserved by old

<sup>1</sup> See Skene's "Celtic Scotland," vol. i., bk. i., chap. iv.

writers, also show that it must have been Gaelic, or a dialect of it, and not Cymric or Welsh, as Chalmers attempted to prove. The Pictish people of the Scottish Lowlands were in course of time supplanted by a Saxon population, whose descendants now occupy these districts.

The kingdom of the SCOTS was founded by a colony from Ireland. We have seen that this people are mentioned by Roman historians for the first time as having appeared in Britain in the year 360, when they joined the Picts in invading the Roman territory, but were driven back to Ireland, whence they had come.<sup>1</sup> Other writers concur in regarding Ireland as their place of settlement. Gildas says that when the Picts made their attacks on the Britons from the north, the Scots did the same from the north-west, which indicates Ireland as their country. According to Bede, the Scots migrated from Ireland under their leader Reuda, and secured to themselves, whether by friendship or the sword, those settlements among the Picts which they still possessed in his day. He further informs us that from the name of their commander they were called Dalreudians—for in their language, he says correctly, *dal* signifies “a part”—and that they settled on the north side of the Firth of Clyde. Nennius mentions the Scots as, along with the Picts, making war against the Britons as early as the expedition of the Emperor Severus in the beginning of the third century.<sup>2</sup>

Of the Irish historians, some assign the settlements of the Scots in this country to the middle of the third century, at which time Cairbre Riada (that is, Cairbre “of the long arm”) is said to have brought a colony of them thither. This is the Reuda of Bede.<sup>3</sup> He was one of three sons of Conaire, who reigned as king of Ireland from the year 212 to 222. He acquired a territory in the north of the county of Antrim, and another in Argyllshire. Both districts received from him the name of Dalriada, which is not to be confounded with Dalaraia, so called after a different chieftain. But from the state-

<sup>1</sup> Fordun's history of the first kingdom of the Scots in Scotland, founded by Fergus, son of Ferchard, B.C. 330, and ending A.D. 360, when they were driven out by Maximus, is fictitious, as the kingdom itself is. See “Historians of Scotland,” iv. 385.

<sup>2</sup> Gildas, § 14; Nennius, § 15; Bede's “Eccl. Hist.,” bk. i. chap. xii.-xv.

<sup>3</sup> See “Historians of Scotland,” iv. 389.



ments of other Irish historians, with which the Scottish Chronicles agree, it has been inferred that the first settlement of the Scots in Argyll did not take place till the year 498, at which date the three sons of Erc—Loarn, Angus, and Fergus—passed over into Alban, and there acquired territory which is said to have received the name of Dalriada from the district previously so named in Ireland whence they came. Tighernac, the Irish annalist, records that in the year 501 “Fergus Mor, son of Erc, with the tribe of Dalrnada, held a part of Britain, and died there,” his reign having lasted three years.<sup>1</sup> While this statement is precise as to the time of Fergus’ death, it is not so explicit otherwise as to be decisive of the period at which his tribe settled in Argyllshire. It does not necessarily imply that the sons of Erc brought any colony thither with them. The words used are not inconsistent with the supposition that the Dalriadic people may have been settled in Argyll, and that the district occupied by them may have received the name of Dalriada, long before the sons of Erc came thither.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that the earlier settlements of the Scots in Britain indicated by Nennius may refer to their incursions in the fourth century, and their temporary occupation of Britain during eight years. Be this as it may, it appears very doubtful if we can thus interpret Bede’s account, which is circumstantial, and is also earlier by about three centuries than the statements of the Irish and Scottish annalists referred to. The accounts given by Bede and those annalists may be reconciled by supposing that after the Scots from the north of Ireland had been brought to Argyll by Reuda, and had been for a long time settled there—the headquarters and chieftainship of the tribe being still in Ireland—the sons of Erc crossed over to Argyll in order to consolidate the possessions, and assume the government of their countrymen in that territory. But apart from this supposition, as the channel which separates Ireland from the Mull of Kintyre is only about thirteen miles in width, it appears not improbable that at a period long before

<sup>1</sup> “Chron. Picts and Scots,” 66.

<sup>2</sup> “In the former half of the fifth century, the tribes of Scoti, who had some time before settled in the islands and western coasts of Argyll, were not known or regarded as a people distinct from the Scoti of Ireland. They had no kings or chieftains of their own, they had no fixed seats in the country to which they had migrated.”—*Todd’s Life of St. Patrick*,” 283.

the end of the fifth century the Scots may have been crossing over into Alban for the purpose of making settlements there as well as incursions into the Roman territory.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the precise time of the arrival of the first Scottish colony in our country, it is clear that the coming of the sons of Ere denoted some forward movement of importance, and was soon followed by the commencement of a Scottish kingdom in Alban. Fergus, the youngest son, appears to have succeeded his eldest brother Loarn; and, as the government devolved upon his lineal descendants, he is reckoned the founder of the Scottish dynasty of Dalriada. The tribe of Angus acquired Isla and Jura; that of Loarn possessed the district now called, from his name, Lorn; while the two grandsons of Fergus, Gabran and Comgall, occupied Kintyre and Knapdale, with the small islands adjacent, and the district of Cowal, so named after the latter of them. The kingdom of the Dalriads was bounded on the east by the chain of mountains called Drumalban (*Dorsum Britannia*, or "backbone of Britain"), separating Argyllshire from Perthshire, and extended northwards to Lochleven. Its capital was Dunadd, a fortified rock in the moss of Crinan, near the river Add. The language spoken by the Dalriadic people was, of course, Irish Gaelic—then, and for centuries thereafter, called the Scottish tongue, and in more recent times Irish or Erse, after the name "Scotch" came to be applied to the speech of the Saxon Lowlanders.<sup>2</sup>

The kingdom of STRATHCLYDE extended from the Firth of Clyde to the river Derwent in Cumberland. It also included the district north of the Clyde as far as the head of Lochlomond, but did not embrace Galloway. Its people were descendants of the Romanized Britons, and belonged to the Cymric or Welsh branch of the Celtic race. Their language was Welsh. Their capital bore the Welsh name of Alcluth, or the Rock of the Clyde, and was afterwards called Dunbreatan, or the fortress of the Britons, now Dunbarton.

The fourth—a SAXON or ANGLIC—kingdom embraced the eastern districts extending from the Firth of Forth to the

<sup>1</sup> See Innes' "Critical Essay," 346 (1879).

<sup>2</sup> See Skene's "Celtic Scotland," vol. i., bk. i., chap. v.

Tees, and was occupied by a Saxon population.<sup>1</sup> The traditional accounts given by Gildas, Nennius, and Bede of the conquest of Britain by the Saxons—how they were invited by Vortigern, king of the Britons, and arrived in three long ships under Hengist and Horsa—are not reconcilable with the statements of Roman authors, nor with each other.<sup>2</sup> As they are not now considered to give the true explanation of the manner in which the Teutonic race acquired possession of England, they may here be passed over. Forming a portion of the assailants of the Roman provinces in Britain in the year 364, the Saxons, though then repulsed, soon renewed their incursions; and from that period onwards they appear to have been arriving in immense and successive swarms. Before the end of the fourth century they had acquired settlements along the south-eastern shores of Britain, and by the middle of the fifth century the greater part of England had been conquered by them.<sup>3</sup> According to Nennius, Arthur, whom the petty kings of Britain chose as supreme commander of their forces, fought twelve battles against the Saxons—all of which appear to have been in Scotland—and in every one of them he was victorious. The line of his advance, during which the first eight of these engagements took place, extended from the Lennox on the west to the valley of the Gala, or Wedale, on the east. He then proceeded to master four great fortresses—Dunbarton; Stirling; Mynydd Agned, or Edinburgh, a stronghold of the Picts; and, lastly, Badon or Boudon Hill, in the centre of the country, between these strongholds.<sup>4</sup> In this final and most severe contest, which took place in the year 516, we are gravely told that Arthur slew with his own hand 840 men. He himself was slain at Camelon in 537. It was not till long after his day that the exploits of this general were expanded to the full-blown dimensions of the Arthurian romance. The more the Saxons were vanquished, Nennius tells us, the more did they seek assistance from Germany; and they increased prodigiously without intermission, and brought kings from Germany to rule

<sup>1</sup> The general term Saxons included the Jutes, Angles, Saxons, and Frisians.

<sup>2</sup> See *Proceed. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, iv. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Skene's "Four Ancient Books of Wales," i. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Queen Guinevere's death, according to local tradition, took place at Meikle in Strathmore, near which is Arthursstone.

over them in Britain; and they reigned till the time of Ida, the son of Ebba, who was the first king in Bernicia. It was in the year 547 that Ida formed the Angles and Frisians, who appear to have crossed over from Hanover and Friesland, and who occupied the east coast from the Tees northwards, into the kingdom of Bernicia. This kingdom was gradually extended to the Firth of Forth, which was called the Frisian Sea. Ida made Bamborough his capital. The district extending southward from the Tees to the Humber, named Deira, was afterwards added to Bernicia, and formed along with it the kingdom of Northumbria. From the dialects spoken by these and other Teutonic invaders has been mainly derived our modern English tongue.

We have thus seen that while the present Scotland was in the sixth century divided into four separate kingdoms, which represented successive arrivals of as many races more or less distinct, the people were still mainly Celtic in blood and language; and the two kingdoms whose inhabitants were most similar in these respects embraced the whole country north of the Forth and Clyde. We need not suppose that as the successive races took possession of different portions of the country, they exterminated their previous inhabitants. The Saxons probably reduced to slavery the Britons in the districts which they conquered. There is thus, doubtless, a large admixture of Celtic blood in the present population both of England and the Lowland districts of Scotland, just as Iberian blood may have previously been mingled with that of the Britons.



## CHAPTER II.

## RELIGION OF THE CELTS AND SAXONS.

The Druids of Gaul and Britain—Stone-circles not Druidical—Celtic festivals—Druids in Ireland—They oppose St. Patrick—Druids in Scotland—They oppose St. Columba—Religion of the Anglo-Saxons—The Eddas—Sketch of the Norse mythology—Surviving memorials of paganism.

THE religious beliefs and practices of the various races inhabiting Scotland before their conversion to Christianity now claim our attention.

Concerning the religion of the Celts, our first authority is Julius Cæsar. His account is clear and circumstantial, and was doubtless derived from his own observation, as well as from other trustworthy sources. It is the Celtic religion as practised in Gaul which he describes; but as he states that this system had its headquarters in Britain—where, indeed, it had originated—its prevalence in this island can hardly be disputed.

According to Cæsar, the Celtic priests were called Druids, and presided over divine worship, including public and private sacrifices to the gods. They decided all questions concerning crimes, inheritance, and landmarks; and took effectual means for enforcing their decisions by fixing rewards and punishments, and by excluding those who disregarded their decrees, whether occupying a public or private station, from participation in the sacrifices. Such as were thus excommunicated were held to be impious: every one shunned their society: legal rights were denied to them: and they were ineligible for any honour. The Druids were, moreover, the teachers of the principles of religion. Thus controlling religion, education, and law, they were also exempted from military service, and from taxes and public burdens. Such privileges could not fail to attract many to their ranks. Young men flocked to them in great numbers to receive education. The combined influences of piety, self-interest, and the wishes of parents and relatives brought many candidates for initiation into their religious rites, and some remained for twenty years under instruc-



tion. Their method of imparting this was to make their pupils learn a great number of verses, the subject of which it was held to be unlawful to commit to writing, though in other religious matters the Greek alphabet was used. Cæsar gives it as his own opinion that this method was adopted partly because the memory of their pupils would thus be better exercised than by the use of books, and partly to keep the common people in ignorance of their doctrines. They especially inculcated the belief that men's souls do not perish, but migrate after death from one individual to another. They also discoursed and taught the youths much about the stars and their motions, the size of the world and the countries it contained, the nature of things, and the power of the immortal gods.

Over all the Druids one presided. At his death he was succeeded by any individual of the rest who was the most honoured amongst them. If there were several equal in this respect, the office was filled by election; and so greatly coveted was the Arch-druid's position that it was sometimes contended for by arms. This system was believed to have been devised in Britain, and thence transplanted into Gaul. In Cæsar's time those who wished to become more thoroughly versed in it went to Britain for that purpose.

Cæsar gives the names of the gods worshipped by the Druids, but they are those of Roman deities—Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva—and are evidently selected as most nearly resembling, in their reputed attributes, the objects of Druidical devotion. To these gods were offered human victims as sacrifices by such as were engaged in war, or suffering from disease, or involved in other dangers, in the belief that they could be propitiated only by life given for life. Sometimes they filled with living men images of immense size formed of osiers interwoven together, and, setting these on fire, burned their victims to death. Capital punishment was thus inflicted on evil-doers as specially pleasing to the gods; and when a supply of these failed, the innocent were sacrificed. To the god of war was devoted whatever was taken in battle.<sup>1</sup>

Other classical authors refer to the Druids and the high estimation in which they were held. Diodorus Siculus men-

<sup>1</sup> Cæsar, "De Bello Gallico," vi. 13-17.

tions them as being greatly venerated among the Gauls, and also states that the same people had composers of verses whom they called Bards, and who, singing to instruments similar to lyres, applauded some, while they vituperated others. The bards existed also in Britain and Ireland till a comparatively recent period. The same author also mentions another class, called Soothsayers, who by auguries and the sacrifice of victims foretold future events.<sup>1</sup> Strabo, while referring to the bards and soothsayers, says—what is very credible—that the Druids were intrusted with the settlement of both public and private controversies, because they were deemed the most upright; and concerning their doctrines, he adds, that they held that souls are immortal, and that the world is so also; yet that fire and water will ultimately obtain supremacy.<sup>2</sup> Pliny tells us that the Druids performed their religious rites in oak-groves, and that from this practice it was believed they derived their name.<sup>3</sup> They held the mistletoe in veneration when it grew upon an oak. Under this tree they offered sacrifices. When they had made due preparation for the solemnity they led thither two white bulls. The priest, clothed in a white garment, then mounted the tree, and with a golden sickle cut down the mistletoe, which was received in a white cloth by another standing below. They then sacrificed the victims. The same writer tells a ridiculous story of the anguineum or serpents' egg, which was the combined product of many serpents intertwined, and was worn as a charm by the Druids.<sup>4</sup>

The Druids of Britain, being doubtless imbued with a love of the ancient traditions, and anxious to maintain the independence of their country, used their influence to incite the people to resist the Roman arms. For this reason the Emperor Claudius is stated to have suppressed them, and to have prohibited their religious rites. But his success in this could only have been partial, as they survived to Christian times. The island of Anglesey appears to have been one of the chief seats of the Druidical system; and Tacitus tells us how Paulinus Suetonius,

<sup>1</sup> "Hist.," v. 31. ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," ciii.)

"Geogr.," lib. iv. ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," civ.)

<sup>3</sup> From *δρῦς*, an oak-tree. Dr. Reeves holds that the name Druid is not derived from the Greek, but from the Celtic *drai*. Reeves' edition of "Adamnan's Life of Columba" ("Historians of Scotland," vi. 261).

<sup>4</sup> "Hist. Nat.," xxiv. 62, 63; xxix. 12 ("Mon. Hist. Brit.," civ.)



a Roman general, fitted out in the year 61 an expedition against the island as being a stronghold of the Britons and a refuge for deserters. His troops, on landing, were met by the armed natives assembled in great force to resist invasion. While women, like Furies, ran about amongst them, with hair dishevelled and clad in funereal garments, bearing torches, the Druids with uplifted hands poured out dire imprecations against the enemy. The Roman soldiers were at first struck with terror at the novelty of the sight, but were at length victorious; the groves, sacred to cruel superstitions, were cut down, and the Druids were consumed in the fires which they had prepared for the destruction of the invaders.<sup>1</sup>

Such is the testimony of classical authors to the existence of the Druids—upon which doubt has recently been thrown—to the nature of their doctrines and rites, and to the powerful influence they wielded. Though the statements of these writers must be held to prove the prevalence of Druidism in Britain as well as in Gaul, yet it is to South Britain they appear specially to refer. Druidism is not expressly mentioned by Roman historians in connection with Caledonia, though, as we shall see, there were Druids both amongst the Picts and Scots. The alleged veneration for the mistletoe, however, could not apply to the latter, since it is not a native of Scotland. Tacitus states that when the Caledonian tribes had entered into a confederacy to resist Agricola's invasion of their territory, they ratified it "by assemblies and sacrifices," which seems to imply the presence of a priesthood.<sup>2</sup> We have reason here to regret the brevity of the historian's narrative. If he had only added a few sentences more, and condescended to tell us some circumstances connected with those assemblies, of what the sacrifices consisted, and by whom and with what accompaniments they were offered, the information would now be exceedingly interesting, and much controversy would have been prevented. We should then know how far the priests and the sacrificial observances corresponded with Cæsar's description of the Druids and their rites. But Tacitus probably considered such matters, when they referred only to barbarians, to be beneath his notice.

<sup>1</sup> "Annal.," xiv. 29, 30.

<sup>2</sup> "Vita Agricolaë," xxvii.

Certain kinds of ancient monuments which exist in great abundance in the British Islands have come to be associated in the popular belief with the religion of the Druids. They consist of huge blocks of unhewn stone placed in an erect position, and are known as "standing-stones." In some cases there is only a single upright pillar. More frequently there is a group of such, variously arranged. Those called "cromlechs," or "dolmens," are formed of two or more erect stones supporting a broad slab, which rests upon them horizontally. They bear a general likeness to a massively constructed table, and still more resemble those "table-monuments" which are frequently to be seen in our churchyards, and, one could imagine, to have been planned in imitation of the ancient cromlechs. Groups of standing-stones are found whose members are set in an oval, or semicircle, or ellipse; but the most characteristic form is that of a circle, or two concentric circles, having in the centre a large block, or, in some instances, a cromlech with or without a huge barrow or mound of earth raised over it. The most remarkable examples in Britain are those of Stonehenge and Avebury, which have often been described, and now unfortunately are to a considerable extent demolished. A special feature of the Avebury group—appearing in only a few other examples and on a smaller scale—consisted of two avenues which proceeded from the great circle in opposite directions, easterly and westerly. Each avenue was upwards of a mile in length, and was formed of two parallel rows of standing stones; and one of the avenues terminated in two concentric ovals. At Carnac, in Brittany, there is an enormous number—from 10,000 to 12,000—of standing stones, which are arranged in straight lines with an ellipse at one end. The largest groups found in Scotland are inferior to those we have mentioned, though noteworthy in their own way. They are situated in distant islands—at Stennis in Orkney, and at Callernish in Lewis. At the former place, as at many others, a ditch and mound of earth surround the circle by way of fence or boundary. When the circle was complete there were fifty-nine stones, which were 13 feet apart. The largest stone is 17 feet in height. At Callernish the stones have a cruciform arrangement, from which however, it would be erroneous to

infer that this had any reference to the doctrines of the Christian faith.<sup>1</sup>

These imposing memorials of the past have excited the wonder and curiosity of many generations. When we view the extent of the greater circles, with their accompanying out-works, and the huge dimensions of the stones of which they are composed, and consider what powerful mechanical appliances must have been employed in bringing them together and erecting them in their places, the questions are forced upon us, By whom, and with what design, were these stupendous structures raised? It is but a truism to say that their authors must have had some object in view which they deemed worthy of the prodigious labour and sustained effort required for their erection. It is not wonderful that a religious purpose has by many been regarded as alone adequate to account for them. It has been maintained that the stone-circles were Druidical temples, and were erected within groves of oak trees; that cromlechs were the altars on which the Druids sacrificed human victims; and that the ashes or bits of charcoal often found beneath them were the remains of the wood employed in burning the sacrifices. But plausible and popular as this theory is, there is an utter absence of evidence to support it. In what classical or other ancient authors have written about Druidism there is absolutely nothing to connect stone-circles and cromlechs with its cruel rites.

The mystery attached to these monuments has now to a considerable extent been removed. In recent times abundant evidence has been collected to prove that their original purpose was sepulchral. Under many cromlechs and within many so-called Druidical circles human bones have been discovered, along with implements and other objects prized by their possessors, which it was the custom of heathen races to bury along with them. Within the historical period pillar stones have been erected to commemorate those who had fallen in battle. Even in such a complex structure as the cruciform group of standing stones at Callernish, a chambered tomb containing human remains was found near the large pillar which stood in the centre of the circle, whence the arms of the cross ex-

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceed. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, iii. 111; Wilson's "Archæology," 109.

tended. The fragments of charcoal which often underlie the cromlech or stone cairn doubtless indicate the fires by which the bodies of the dead were consumed, in order that their ashes might be deposited in urns. We may thus regard even the largest stone-circles and cromlechs as memorials of the departed—of kings, warriors, and other persons of distinction in their day—and as silent witnesses to the existence amongst heathen tribes of the same feelings of reverence as prevail amongst ourselves for the champions and benefactors of their fellow-men.

Though the primary design of the stone-monuments was commemorative, it would nevertheless be a hasty conclusion that this exhausted the purposes for which they may have been used. The burial of the dead has ever evoked the religious sentiments of the living; and there is nothing improbable in the supposition that those remarkable structures, though undoubtedly sepulchral in their origin, may have been subsequently employed in connection with religious observances. Some of them, moreover, appear to have been a favourite resort for judicial and other public assemblies. But that they had any special connection with Druidism, or that stone-circles were temples for the celebration of its rites, or that cromlechs were Druidical altars, are notions destitute alike of proof and probability.

Coins of several Roman emperors have been found, along with human remains, in a cromlech in Derbyshire, over which a large barrow had been raised. From this it may be inferred that some, at least, of these monuments are not older than the period of the Roman occupation of Britain, and that the Celtic races were in the habit of erecting them; and it is probable that they continued to do so for some time afterwards. But these structures are not confined to Celtic countries. Many of them must have been the work of other and older races. They have been found in very distant regions—even in India and America.

Two great Celtic festivals, called Beltane and Samhain, have, whether correctly or otherwise, been commonly considered to be Druidical. Till a recent period they were observed throughout the Scottish Highlands, Ireland, and the Isle of Man;

and some practices connected with them are not yet wholly extinct. Beltane was held on the 1st of May, when, amongst other customs, fires were kindled on the hill-tops in honour of the summer sun, as having triumphed over the coldness and darkness of winter. Samhain, or Samhtheine, signifying "peace-fire," was observed on the 1st of November, to celebrate the kindly influence of the great luminary in maturing the fruits of the earth. Every family or hamlet had then its bonfire kindled in an adjoining field. On the occurrence of this festival domestic fires were extinguished. The "needfire" was then obtained by the friction of one piece of wood against another, and all other fires were relighted from it. Conjoined with other superstitious rites, this observance was supposed to be effectual in driving away disease from cattle, and was practised by the Teutonic as well as by the Celtic race. In the *Mirror* of 24th June, 1826, there is an account of this having been done in Perthshire at so recent a period, on occasion of a cattle epidemic. A farmer, having lost several of his cattle by some disease, caused the survivors of them, along with his horses and swine, to pass through burning wood ignited by needfire.<sup>1</sup>

It has been supposed that Beltane, or Beltein, signifies "the fire of Baal," and indicated a connection with the religion of the ancient Phœnicians. This etymology an eminent Celtic scholar pronounces to be untenable,<sup>2</sup> though he admits that "lucky fire"—another meaning which has been assigned to Beltane—is a possible interpretation of the word. But we do not need to seek the origin of this festival in an Asiatic religion. It is a well-established fact that the worship of the sun by the lighting of bonfires was anciently practised all over Europe. So difficult did the Church find the task of entirely rooting out these pagan customs, that it judged it expedient to permit their continuance by converting them into Christian festivals. In this way Samhain was changed into Hallowe'en, or the Eve of All Hallows, or All Saints, and was held on the evening before the 1st of November.

Beltane and Samhain were observed at Callander and Logie-rait, in Perthshire, about the end of last century in the following manner:—On May Day all the boys of a hamlet

<sup>1</sup> Kemble's "Saxons in England," i. 360.

<sup>2</sup> Todd, in "Life of St. Patrick," 144.



met in the fields, and cut a circular trench in the turf so as to inclose a space resembling a round table, large enough to hold the entire company. Within this space they kindled a fire, and cooked a dish of milk and eggs of the consistence of a custard. They then kneaded a cake of oatmeal, having small lumps in the form of nipples raised all over its surface; and, placing it against a stone, toasted it at the embers. The custard was then eaten; and the cake was divided into as many portions, similar to each other in shape and size, as there were persons in the company. They daubed one of these portions all over with charcoal till it became perfectly black; placed all the bits of the cake in a bonnet; and every boy, blindfolded, drew out one of them. He who held the bonnet was entitled to the last bit. Whoever drew the black bit was the devoted person, and was to be sacrificed to "Baal," whose favour they meant to implore in rendering the year productive of sustenance to man and beast. The devoted person was then compelled to leap three times through the flames, which closed the ceremony of this festival. This symbolical act of leaping through the fire was evidently a survival from the time when the devoted person was sacrificed, by being bound on the pile and burned to death.<sup>1</sup> Samhain was observed at Logierait in the following manner:—On the evening of the 31st of October a faggot was formed of heath, broom, and dressings of flax tied upon a pole, and was then kindled. One ran round the village bearing it on his shoulders, and attended by a crowd. When the first faggot was burnt out a second was bound to the pole, and kindled as before. Many such blazing faggots were often carried about together, forming a splendid illumination in a dark night.<sup>2</sup> At Callander the proceedings were different. A bonfire was kindled in every village. When it was consumed, the ashes were carefully collected in the form of a circle. A stone was then put in near the circumference of the circle for every member of the several families interested in the bonfire. Whatever stone was moved out of its place, or injured, before next morning, the person represented by that stone was devoted, or *fey*, and was supposed not to live twelve months from that day.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Old Statistical Account," v. 84, and xi. 620.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 84.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xi. 621.

There is abundant proof of the existence amongst the Scots and Picts, both of Ireland and Scotland, of a class of persons called Druids, who had great influence with the people; but it does not appear that they formed an organized hierarchy as in Gaul, or that the whole body was presided over by an Archdruid. They were frequently attached to the households of kings and chieftains. Their Celtic name was *Druadh*. By the historians who wrote in Latin they are called *Magi*—the Oriental word which in our English Bible is translated “wise men,” “magicians,” “sorcerers.” In Irish writings the “wise men” who came from the East to salute the new-born Messiah are termed Druids; and Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses (2 Tim. iii. 8) are described as “two Egyptian Druids.”<sup>1</sup>

As the names of certain deities inscribed on altars which have been found in South Britain do not occur in classical mythology, it has been supposed they were those of gods worshipped by the natives, and adopted as objects of devotion by their Roman conquerors who dwelt amongst them. Be this as it may, it does not appear that the Celtic people of Ireland and Scotland, who held substantially the same religious beliefs, had any personal deities. They worshipped the powers and elements of nature—the heavenly bodies, rivers, fountains, and such like—and imaginary beings or influences supposed to reside in these, and to act through them.<sup>2</sup> The Druids were believed to be able, by means of magical rites and incantations, to enlist the favour and assistance of these beings in the execution of their own designs. On many occasions they opposed the Christian missionaries as the preachers of a new religion. Details of their proceedings are recorded, and from these we obtain much information—though it is of a somewhat vague description—regarding the religion of the Scots and Picts. as well as the pretensions of the Druids themselves.

An Irish life of St. Columba states that when he made his first visit to Brude, the king of the Picts of Scotland, the king's

<sup>1</sup>Reeves' edition of “*Adamnan's Life of Columba*” (“*Historians of Scotland*,” vi. 261).

<sup>2</sup>See Todd's “*Life of St. Patrick*,” 456, note.



son Mailcu, and his Druid, came and contended with him by the aid of magic; but both of them died suddenly through the words of the saint.<sup>1</sup> Adamnan, the biographer of Columba, tells us of a Druid, Broichan by name, who is called the foster-father of King Brude, and also his tutor, and who held in durance a certain Scotie (that is, Irish) female slave whom Columba, from motives of humanity, besought him to set at liberty. On Broichan's refusal to do so, Columba threatens him with sudden death. Soon after this he is struck by an angel from heaven, and is left half dead; whereupon the king sends a messenger after Columba, who had departed, to inform him of Broichan's punishment, and his willingness now to liberate the girl; and requests him to cure the Druid. Columba consents, on condition that he should first promise to set the maiden free. She obtains her liberty, and Broichan is cured by means of a pebble sent by Columba, which, when immersed in water, floated, because it had been blessed by the saint. Broichan drinks of the water in which the pebble floated, and is restored to health. Nevertheless the Druid was still hostile to Columba, and endeavoured to thwart him. One day he said to the saint, "Tell me, when dost thou propose to sail?" He replied, "I intend to begin my voyage after three days, if God permits me, and preserves my life." Broichan said, "On the contrary, thou shalt not be able, for I can make the winds unfavourable to thy voyage, and cause a great darkness to envelop thee in its shade." That same day the saint, accompanied by a large number of followers, goes to Loch Ness, as he had determined. Then the Druids—of whom there must have been several—begin to exult, seeing that it had become very dark, and that the wind was very violent and contrary. Columba, observing the state of the wind and water, calls on Christ the Lord, and embarks in his small boat, at the same time ordering the sailors, who hesitated, to raise the sails. Immediately, while the crowd is looking on, the vessel runs against the wind with great speed. The wind soon becomes favourable, and Columba completes his voyage in safety.<sup>2</sup> In relating this incident Adamnan remarks that we should not wonder that God sometimes allowed the

<sup>1</sup> MS. in Advocates' Library, quoted by Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Adamnan's "Life of Columba," bk. ii. chap. 34, 35.

Druids, with the aid of evil spirits, to raise tempests and agitate the sea; from which we may infer that the exercise of supernatural power by the Druids was not denied by the Christian missionaries, but was by them believed to proceed from evil spirits or demons, who were the gods of the Druids, and whom the saints were superstitiously supposed to be able to overcome by angelic aid.

Adamnan relates an incident from which it appears that those demons were supposed to dwell in fountains. When Columba was in the province of the Picts, "he heard that there was a fountain famous amongst this heathen people, which foolish men, having their senses blinded by the devil, worshipped as a god. For those who drank of this fountain, or purposely washed their hands or feet in it, were allowed by God to be struck by demoniacal art, and went home either leprous or purblind, or at least suffering from weakness or other kinds of infirmity. By all these things the Pagans were seduced, and paid divine honour to the fountain." Columba goes to the fountain fearlessly; and, on seeing this, the Druids, whom he had often sent away from him vanquished and confounded, greatly rejoice, thinking that he will suffer like others from the touch of that baneful water. But he, having first raised his hand and invoked the name of Christ, washes his hands and feet; and then, with his companions, drinks of the water which he had blessed. From that day the demons departed from the fountain; no one was again injured; but, on the contrary, many diseases were cured by it.<sup>1</sup> On another occasion, when Columba was tarrying for some days in the province of the Picts, a certain peasant, his wife, children, and domestics having listened to his preaching of the Word, believed and were baptized. A few days after his conversion one of the sons of this man was attacked by a dangerous illness, and was at the point of death. The Druids, seeing him in this condition, began with great bitterness to upbraid his parents, and to extol their own gods as more powerful than the God of the Christians, and thus to despise God, as though he were weaker than their gods. On this being told to Columba, he proceeds to the peasant's house, where he finds that the child has just died, and

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan's "Life of Columba," bk. ii. chap. 10.

the parents are celebrating his obsequies. After prayer to Christ the Lord, Columba—as the tale is told—restores the son to life, and the sorrow of the parents is turned into joy.<sup>1</sup> While we reject the miraculous part of these legends, we must admit the testimony which they furnish as to the nature of the Celtic religion and the pretended powers of the Druids.

In the life of St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, there are many incidents which illustrate the religious beliefs of the Celtic people, and also the practices of the Druids. A certain king Laoghaire had two daughters, whom he placed under the care of two Druids, named Mael and Caplit. Patrick was at Crochan, an ancient residence of the kings of Connaught, in the county of Roscommon. There he and his attendants assembled one morning, at sunrise, at a well or fountain called Clebach, and sat down near the well. “And lo! the two daughters of King Laoghaire, Ethne the fair and Fedelm the ruddy, came early to the well to wash, after the manner of women, and they found near the well a synod (or company) of holy bishops with Patrick. And they knew not whence they were, or in what form, or from what people, or from what country; but they supposed them to be men of *Sidhe*, or gods of the earth, or a phantom. And the virgins said unto them, ‘Where are ye? and whence come ye?’ And Patrick said unto them, ‘It were better for you to confess to our true God, than to inquire concerning our race.’ The first virgin said, ‘Who is God? and where is God? and of what (nature) is God? and where is His dwelling-place? Has your God sons and daughters, gold and silver? Is He ever-living? Is He beautiful? Did many foster His Son? Are His daughters dear and beauteous to men of the world? Is He in heaven or in earth? in the sea? in rivers? in mountainous places? in valleys? Declare unto us the knowledge of Him. How shall He be seen? How is He to be loved? How is He to be found? Is it in youth? is it in old age, that He is to be found?’” In answer to these questions Patrick gives the royal maidens instruction in the doctrines of the Christian faith, and they are converted. The two Druids also are converted, and at the same time a kind of Druidical tonsure which

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan's "Life of Columba," bk. ii. chap. 33.

they used is removed from their heads as being a mark of paganism. The "men of Sidhe," or gods of the earth, referred to in this narrative were the fairies, who were supposed to dwell in the hollows of the mountains.<sup>1</sup> These beings are further mentioned in a metrical life of St. Patrick, which states that—

"He preached threescore years  
The Cross of Christ to the Tuatha of Feni.  
On the Tuatha of Erin there was darkness.  
The Tuatha adored the Side."<sup>2</sup>

Their nature is thus described in another ancient book:—"The demoniac power was great before the introduction of the Christian faith; and so great was it, that they, that is, the demons, used to tempt the people in human bodies, and that they used to show them secrets and places of happiness, where they should be immortal; and it was in that way they were believed. And it is these phantoms that the unlearned people call Sidhe and Aes Sidhe."<sup>3</sup>

A legend of St. Patrick gives an account of an "idolatrous festival which the Gentiles were wont to observe with many incantations and magical inventions; gathering together the kings and chieftains of the people; summoning also the magicians, enchanters, augurs, with the inventors or teachers of every art or gift, unto Laoghaire." A contest ensues between Patrick and the Druids of King Laoghaire, similar to that of Moses with the Egyptian magicians. The whole narrative is, of course, fabulous, yet it illustrates the beliefs prevalent at the time of its composition. Amongst other incidents described, the Druid pours poison into Patrick's cup; the saint blesses the cup, and removes the poison. The Druid then by his magical incantations covers the plain with snow; Patrick blesses the plain, and the snow vanishes. Again, the Druid brings thick darkness upon the earth; Patrick causes the sun to shine forth, and the darkness is at an end.<sup>4</sup> A hymn believed to have been composed by St. Patrick, and to be the oldest monument of the Irish language in existence, and which

<sup>1</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 452.

<sup>2</sup> The untranslated word Tuath is said to mean both a territory and a tribe, as well as the people generally ("Celtic Scotland," ii. 108).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. ii. 110.

<sup>4</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 420-425.

is referred to this occasion, shows that he himself, though a Christian missionary, was not altogether freed from the superstitious ideas of the heathen around him. In this composition, after calling to his aid the power of the Holy Trinity, of Christ, of angels, prophets, and apostles, against the snares of demons and other spiritual enemies, he says :—

“I bind to myself to-day The power of Heaven, The light of the Sun, The whiteness of Snow, The force of Fire,	The flashing of Lightning, The velocity of Wind, The depth of the Sea, The stability of the Earth, The hardness of the Rocks.”
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The structure of the hymn is now changed—

“I have set around me all these powers,  
 Against every savage hostile power  
 Directed against my body and soul,  
 Against the incantations of false prophets,  
 Against the black laws of heathenism,  
 Against the false laws of heresy,  
 Against the deceits of idolatry,  
 Against the spells of women, smiths, and Druids,  
 Against all knowledge which blinds the soul of man.”<sup>1</sup>

The belief that the gods of the earth, or demons, dwelt in the powers of nature is illustrated by incidents said to be connected with the fortunes of two Irish kings. King Laoghaire, already mentioned, in attempting to enforce a claim of an annual tribute of cattle from the kings of Leinster, was taken prisoner, and in order to obtain his liberty “he gave guarantees of the sun, of the wind, and of the elements to the men of Leinster that he would never again come against them;” but he having violated his oath, “the sun and the wind killed him, because he had outraged them.”<sup>2</sup> Another king is said to have received as pledges from the nation, “sun, and moon, and every power which is in heaven and in earth,” that the sovereignty should always remain in his family. Patrick, in his journeyings, is said to have once come to a certain fountain called Slan, to which the Druids gave worship and offerings as to a god. On another occasion, when he was approaching a certain place, “a very great crowd of Druids assembled, with the chief Druid,

<sup>1</sup> Todd’s “Life of St. Patrick,” 426.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 437.



who wished to slay Patrick; and he came to them with nine Druids clad in white garments, with a magical host.<sup>1</sup>

Though the Celts are sometimes vaguely said to have had idols, they had no personal deities, properly so called, nor images of such; yet they appear to have worshipped pillar stones. King Laoghaire had for an idol a massive stone pillar which stood in a plain in the county of Cavan. It was called Cromeruach, and had twelve subordinate idols of stone around it. The central pillar is also said to have been of gold, and the others of brass. They were probably covered with plates of these metals, and may have originally formed a so-called Druidical circle or sepulchral monument. This Cromeruach was termed the principal idol of Erin, and was "the god of all the people of Erin till the coming of Patrick."<sup>2</sup> There were also other instances in Ireland of pillar stones being worshipped as idols in heathen times.

Reverting to the Celts of Scotland, we find similar beliefs and practices prevalent amongst them. A Pictish legend tells us that the Cruithnigh, or Picts, came from Thrace to Ireland; that six brothers of them arrived first; and that a king of Leinster "said he would give them welcome on the expulsion of the Tuatha Fidhbha. Drostan, one of the six, the Druid of the Cruithnigh, ordered that the milk of seven score white cows should be spilled when the battle should be fought. This was done, and the battle was fought by them, viz.—Ardleamhnachta, in Ibh Ceinnselaigh. Every one when they were wounded used to lie down in the new milk, and the poison did not injure any of them." A portion of them were afterwards driven from Ireland to Scotland. "Six of them remained over Breaghmuigh. From them are every spell and every charm, and every sreed, and voices of birds, and every omen."<sup>3</sup> A poem contained in this legend mentions "Drostan, the powerful diviner," and states that—

"They cut down the plundering host of Fea,  
Who were aided by poison,  
By their fierce deeds,  
In the battle of Ardleamnacht."

<sup>1</sup> "Celtic Scotland," ii. 110–112.

<sup>2</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 127.

<sup>3</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 30.



And further—

“A Druid of the Cruithnigh, of friendship,  
Discovered a cure for the wounded,  
New milk in which they were washed,  
In powerful bathing.”

Of those who remained it is said—

“There remained of them in Ealga,  
With many artificers and warriors,  
They would not leave Breagmach,  
Six demon-like Druids—  
Necromancy and idolatry, illusion,  
In a fair and well-walled house,  
Plundering in ships, bright poems  
By them were taught.  
The honouring of sreds and omens,  
Choice of weather, lucky times,  
The watching the voice of birds,  
They practised without disguise.”<sup>1</sup>

Some of these pagan charms are mentioned in a poem ascribed to St. Columba, in the conclusion of which he thus states that he places his trust not in such superstitions, but in God only :—

“Our fate depends not on sneezing,  
Nor on a bird perched on a twig ;  
Nor on the root of a knotted tree,  
Nor on the noise of clapping hands.  
Better is He in whom we trust,  
The Father, the One, and the Son.”

In another stanza he says :—

“I adore not the voice of birds,  
Nor sneezing, nor lots in this world ;  
Nor a boy, nor chance, nor woman :  
My Druid is Christ the Son of God.”<sup>2</sup>

Again, in a poetical prayer which Columba is said to have addressed to the Almighty on the occasion of the victory gained by his party in the battle of Cooldrevny, he thus speaks :—

“My Druid—may He be on my side !—  
Is the Son of God, and truth with purity.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Chron. Picts and Scots,” 34-42.    <sup>2</sup> Todd’s “Life of St. Patrick,” 122.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid. 120.

A modern instance of the use of such language is given by Jamieson. An old man, who lived in the parish of Moulin in the last century, "although very regular in his devotions, never addressed the Supreme Being by any other title than that of *Arch-Druid*—accounting every other derogatory to the divine majesty."<sup>1</sup>

Another Pictish legend states that Cruithnechan went over from Ireland to the Britons of Fortrenn to fight against the Saxons; and that, having returned to Ireland in order to get wives for his followers, "he swore by heaven and by earth, and the sun and the moon, by the dew and the elements, by the sea and the land, that the regal succession among them for ever should be on the mother's side."<sup>2</sup>

The religion of the Cymric people of Strathclyde appears, from the few references to it which exist, to have been, like that of the Picts, a kind of nature-worship, though it was latterly tinged with the mythology of the Saxons, whose territory was contiguous to their own. Gildas alludes to the worship of idols by the Britons in language which, though probably exaggerated, had doubtless a basis of truth; and also to a deification by them of the powers of nature, such as was prevalent amongst the other Celtic pagans. "Nor shall I enumerate," he says, "those diabolical idols of my country, which almost surpassed in number those of Egypt, and of which we still see some smouldering away within or without the deserted temples, with still and deformed features as was customary. Nor will I call out upon the mountains, fountains, or hills, or upon the rivers, which are now subservient to the use of men, but once were an abomination and destruction to them, and to which the blind people paid divine honour."<sup>3</sup>

These references sufficiently illustrate the character of the paganism of Celtic Scotland. It was the worship of the objects of nature—the lowest form of religion. Ignorant of a higher power, and conscious of his own weakness, man at first contemplates with dread those elemental forces which seem to dominate his fate. The sun and the moon, the dew and the rain, fire and snow, lightning and tempest, he regards

<sup>1</sup> "Hist. Account of the Culdees of Iona," 29.

<sup>2</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Giles' "Six Old English Chronicles," 300.

as hostile powers. He fancies that malignant beings dwell in them, and work through them. He bows down before them, and seeks by magical rites to propitiate and assure himself of their favour. When he has made some progress in subduing the elements and in rendering them subservient to his purposes, he begins to deify his own powers, by which he has made those of nature to avail for his protection and minister to his wants; and the objects of his worship—imaginary beings to whom he ascribes the control of physical phenomena, and of the various departments of human life and action—while partly symbols of the forces of nature, are mainly embodiments of his own virtues and prowess, his own passions and emotions. This is polytheism, and constituted the religious system now to be described.

The faith of the Teutonic inhabitants of the territory south of the Firth of Forth was that of their kindred on the Continent. Such references to the religion of the Germans as occur in classical authors give us but an imperfect idea of its character. On the other hand, Christian missionaries, both in Germany and Britain, made strenuous efforts, which were very successful, to have every monument of idolatry destroyed. Native historians, moreover, had not arisen in these countries till paganism had been formally abolished; and subsequent chroniclers had no desire to keep alive an interest in the gross superstition by which their forefathers had been blinded by minutely describing its rites. From these causes a full account of the characteristics of Saxon heathenism is not supplied by early British or German writers. But this we obtain from another source. There are sufficient grounds for the belief that the religion of Germany was the same as that of Scandinavia. In the latter country a national literature, pervaded by its pagan mythology, had come into existence before Christianity had been introduced. Partly owing to this, but chiefly to another circumstance, an ample description of the Norse religion has been transmitted to us. Towards the end of the ninth century Iceland was colonized by Norwegian emigrants, who fled thither in order to escape the tyranny of Harold Fairhair. These carried the worship of their ancestral gods to their new home, where it flourished till the year 1000, when Christianity was

established by law in Iceland.<sup>1</sup> Full details of the ancient mythology were there committed to writing before they were forgotten. They are contained in two works called the Eddas. The Elder Edda consists of a series of poems collected, most probably from oral tradition, by Saemund Sigfusson, an Icelandic priest, about the end of the eleventh century. The Younger or Prose Edda is ascribed to Snorri Sturlason, and dates from the thirteenth century. It is chiefly derived from the Elder Edda, many poetical extracts from which are embodied in it, and may be regarded as a synopsis of the doctrines of the religion believed and practised by both the Scandinavian and German branches of the Teutonic race many centuries before the Norse emigration to Iceland.<sup>2</sup>

According to Tacitus, the ancient Germans worshipped one Supreme Being, "the Ruler of the universe, to whom all things are submissive and obedient."<sup>3</sup> The Scandinavian mythology also, as set forth in the Eddas, appears to have recognized such a Being, who is described as "the Powerful Sovereign from on high, who ruleth the universe; who is called All-Father; who liveth from all ages; who governeth all realms; who hath formed heaven, and earth, and the air, and all things thereunto belonging; who hath made man, and given him a soul which shall never perish."<sup>4</sup> Some of these statements, however, and a few others of like import, conflict so much with the mythological system of the Eddas, as to create a suspicion that they were interpolated by some Christian copyist. And even if we accept them as genuine, it is doubtful whether they were intended to refer to a Self-Existent Being in the proper sense of these words, or to Odin, to whom a materialistic origin is also ascribed.<sup>5</sup> In the records of the Norse religion there are traces of belief in a sort of Trinity. The Prose Edda mentions Har, Iafnhar, and Thridi, or the High, the Equal of the High, and the Third, who are represented as occupying three thrones, one raised above another. The creation of man and woman is,

<sup>1</sup> An interesting account of the Northmen in Iceland is given in the introduction to "The Story of Burnt Njal," by Dasent.

<sup>2</sup> A translation of the Prose Edda, by Blackwell, is appended to Mallet's "Northern Antiquities" (1857).

<sup>3</sup> "Germania," 39.

<sup>4</sup> Mallet's "Northern Antiquities," 400.

<sup>5</sup> This is not the only instance of inconsistency between different portions of the Eddas.

moreover, ascribed to Odin, Vili, and Ve (Spirit, Will, and Holiness), or Odin, Hoenir, and Lodur, according to the *Völuspá*, or Sybil's Prophecy, the oldest poem of the Elder Edda.<sup>1</sup> It is an interesting fact in this connection that in the heathen temple of Upsal the statues of the gods Odin, Thor, and Frey were placed on three thrones, one above the other.<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing improbable in the supposition that some of the more enlightened of the Teutonic race may have believed in the unity of the Godhead, but it is certain that this doctrine formed no part of the popular creed. Polytheism was the religion of the multitude. While Cæsar asserts that the Germans received as gods only the Sun, Vulcan, and the Moon, Tacitus mentions several other and different gods as worshipped by them, such as those to whom "by a Roman interpretation"—to use a phrase of his own—he gives the names of Mercury, Mars, and Hercules; the goddess Nerthus or Mother Earth; Tuisco, the earth-born god, and his son Man, "the origin and founders of the race."<sup>3</sup> Some of these appear to be identical with the gods of the Eddas.

In giving an outline of the Norse mythology<sup>4</sup> we may begin with its cosmogony.

In the first dawn of time, when as yet there was neither sea nor shore, nor refreshing breeze, nor earth below, nor heaven above—when the sun knew not her home, nor the moon his power,<sup>5</sup> nor the stars their dwelling-place—two regions existed: in the north, Niflheim, cold and gloomy; in the south, Muspellheim, filled with glowing radiance, and guarded by Surtur, bearing in his hand a flaming falchion. Between these regions lay Ginnunga-gap (Yawning Gulf), without vegetation. Into this abyss there flowed from the north rivers of venom, the vapours arising from which congealed into dense layers of ice, while mist and whirlwinds enveloped all. From the southern region, or Muspellheim, came a heated blast which, meeting

<sup>1</sup> A translation of this poem by M. Bergmann is given in an appendix to Madame Pfeiffer's "Visit to Iceland" (1852).

<sup>2</sup> Mallet, 400, 482.

<sup>3</sup> Tacitus, "Germania," 2, 3, 9, 40: Cæsar, "De Bello Gallico," lib. vi. cap. 21.

<sup>4</sup> This is derived from the Prose Edda, Mallet's "Northern Antiquities," 400-458; and Pfeiffer's "Visit to Iceland" (the *Völuspá* in Appendix).

<sup>5</sup> In the northern mythology the sun was of the feminine, and the moon of the masculine gender.



the ice and gelid vapours, melted them into drops; and from these, when quickened into life by the might of Him who sent the heat, was formed the giant Ymir, who was not believed to be a god, but was wicked, as were all his race. He was fed by streams of milk flowing from the udders of the cow Audhumla, which was formed from the melting vapours. When Ymir was sleeping he fell into a sweat, and from one of his arm-pits there came forth a man and a woman, and from his feet a son; and thus were produced the Frost-giants, with whom dwelt the All-Father before he made the heaven and earth.

The manner in which the gods, the earth, and the heavens were produced is thus related:—As the cow Audhumla licked the stones, which were covered with salt and hoar-frost, there sprang from them the first day the hair of a man, the second day a head, and the third day an entire man, who was called Bur. Bör, the son of this man, took to wife Besla, the daughter of a giant, and they had three sons, Odin, Vili, and Ve. These three, who were regarded as gods, slew the giant Ymir (Chaos), and when he fell, there ran so much blood from his wounds that the whole race of Frost-giants were drowned, except one giant and his wife, who escaped in a bark; and thus the evil race continued to exist. The gods then proceeded to form a new world, and having dragged Ymir into the abyss Ginnunga-gap, from his body they made the land, from his hair the trees, and from his bones the mountains, while his teeth, his gums, and broken pieces of his bones served them to make the stones and pebbles. From his blood they formed the vast ocean encircling, as with a ring, the dry land, in the centre of which was placed Midgard, the destined abode of the human race. Round about Midgard they constructed out of Ymir's eyebrows a bulwark against the giants, to whom the outer shores were assigned as their dwelling-place. From his skull they formed the heavens, and set dwarfs, called East, West, North, and South, at their four corners. They afterwards tossed Ymir's brains into the air, and they became the clouds. They then took the sparks and flakes of fire that were cast out of Muspellheim, and, placing them in the heavens, formed them into the sun, moon, stars, and meteors, appointing to each its locality



and motion; and thus were marked out days and months and years.

Then the gods met in the city Asgard—situated in the plain of Ida, the centre of the universe—where they and their kindred dwelt, to regulate the government of the celestial city. Here the Aesir, or chief gods, who were twelve in number, erected a court or hall, with a seat for each of themselves and a throne for All-Father. This hall was resplendent within and without with gold, and was called Gladsheim. They built another hall for the goddesses, who were also twelve in number. Lastly, they built a smithy, furnishing it with hammer, tongs, anvil, and other tools; and with these they worked in metal, stone, and wood, but made all their movables in gold, from which that period was called the Golden Age. The dwarfs, who had been originally only maggots bred in Ymir's flesh, or the mould of the earth, had now the human shape and understanding conferred upon them, though dwelling in rocks and caverns. There were also Elves of Light, whose abode was in heaven; and Elves of Darkness, who lived under the earth.

The formation of man is thus described:—One day the sons of Bør (that is, the gods) found on the sea-shore two pieces of wood, out of which they shaped a man and a woman. Odin infused into them life and spirit; Vili endowed them with reason and the power of motion; Ve gave them speech and features, hearing and vision. The man they named Ask, and the woman Embla. From these two descended the whole human race, to whom Midgard was assigned as their dwelling-place.

From Midgard to Asgard—that is, from earth to heaven—there was a bridge which was of three colours. Its name was Bifröst; men called it the rainbow. Of this bridge Heimdall was the warder, to prevent the giants from forcing their way over it. He required less sleep than a bird, and could see by night as well as by day a hundred miles around him. His ear was so acute that he could hear the grass growing on the earth, and the wool on a sheep's back. He had a horn, which was heard throughout the universe. By this bridge of three hues the gods rode up every day on horseback—

Odin's horse Sleipnir, which had eight legs, being the swiftest—to the holy fountain Urdar, and there sat in judgment. This fountain was under one of the three roots of a famous tree—the sacred ash Ygdrasill (which probably symbolized ever-enduring time, or universal nature subsisting throughout eternity), whose branches spread over the whole world, and even reached above heaven itself. Another of its roots extended to the Frost-giants, and under it was Mimir's well, the source of wisdom and wit. One day All-Father begged and obtained a draught of its water, but had to leave one of his eyes as a pledge for it. The third root of the tree extended to Niflheim, and was gnawed by the serpent Nidhögg, which thus sought to destroy the tree; but this was prevented by the three Norns, who daily drew water from the Urdar fountain, with which they sprinkled the roots. The names of the Norns were Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld (that is, Past, Present, and Future), from the first of which is derived the word *weird*. They had a beautiful dwelling under the sacred ash, where they fixed the fate of every man that was born; and to their decrees even the gods themselves were subject. From the water with which the tree was sprinkled came the dewdrops which fell in the dales, and which men called honey-dew—the food of bees. Upon the branches of the tree was perched an eagle, which knew many things, and between whose eyes sat a hawk; while a squirrel ran up and down the ash, seeking to cause strife between the eagle and the serpent Nidhögg, and four harts ran across its branches, biting its buds.

The chief and father of the gods was Odin or Woden. He gave victory in battle, and claimed the souls of those who were slain, that he might admit them to the enjoyments of Valhalla. When seated on his throne, which was placed in a stately mansion roofed with silver, he could survey the whole world. Two ravens were sent out by him every morning to fly over the earth. In the evening they returned, and, sitting on his shoulders, whispered in his ear the things they had heard and seen. They were called Hugin and Munin (Mind and Memory). It is this god whom Tacitus calls Mercury. Odin's wife was Frigga, the mother of the Aesir. After Odin, the mightiest of all the Aesir, was his son Thor, whose mother was Iörd (the Earth,

*Scotice*, Yird). Thor corresponded to Jupiter Tonans of the classical mythology. He ruled over storms and rain, and thunder was the rumbling of his chariot wheels over the mountain tops. Three things were peculiar to him—his Mallet (the thunderbolt), which, when discharged against an enemy, always returned to his hand; his Belt of Prowess, by which, when he girded himself with it, his strength was doubled; and his iron Gauntlets, with which he grasped the handle of his mallet. Thor was continually at war with the giants, who had painful experience of the force of his mallet, for it had split the skulls of many of their kindred. Odin's second son was Baldur, the delight of all the Aesir. He was so fair in form, and so dazzling in features that rays of light seemed to issue from him; and was highly esteemed as being the mildest, the wisest, and most eloquent of the gods. Njord ruled the winds and the sea, and was invoked by seafarers and fishermen. He is believed to have been the masculine representative of the goddess Nerthus of Tacitus. Frea, Frey, or Freyer gave rains and sunshine, good harvests and peace. The boar was sacred to him. He was also the god of marriage. For his love of the beautiful Gerda he lost his sword, and the day was coming when the want of it was to prove his ruin. Freyja was his sister, who, in every battle to which she rode, claimed one-half of the slain, of whom the other half belonged to Odin. Yet she was the goddess of love, and was very fond of love ditties; and all lovers did well to invoke her. Tiw, or Tyr, the bravest of the gods, was regarded, no less than Odin himself, as the bestower of victory. He corresponded to the god Mars.

The character of Loki was unique. He was the calumniator of the gods, and the author of fraud, cunning, and mischief—the Mephistopheles of the Norse mythology. He often brought the gods into peril that he might have scope for his tricks in extricating them. He was not originally one of the Aesir, but was admitted to their companionship while at heart hostile to them. By a giantess he had three children, the wolf Fenrir, the Midgard serpent, and Hel (Death). The gods, when made aware of the evils they would have to suffer from Loki's progeny, took means to deprive them of their power to hurt. The wolf was with much difficulty, which caused the loss of Tyr's

right hand, chained up, and a sword thrust into his jaw. All-Father threw the serpent into the ocean, where the monster grew to such dimensions that, holding his tail in his mouth, he encircled the whole earth. Hel was cast into Niflheim, where she distributed those who died of sickness or old age among the nine worlds over which she had power. The joys of Valhalla were not for such persons. Hel's habitation was protected by lofty walls and strongly barred gates. "Hunger was her table; Starvation, her knife; Delay, her man; Slowness, her maid; Precipice, her threshold; Care, her bed; and Burning Anguish formed the hangings of her apartments." Her countenance was so stern that no one could fail to recognize her.

The feats performed by Thor with his mallet were prodigious, and utterly surpassed the labours of Hercules. It was only by practising illusions upon his simplicity that any one could gain an advantage over him. Wonderful were the adventures which befel him in his journey to the land of the giants. One night he and his three companions took up their quarters in a chamber adjoining a spacious hall. Outside of it they found a man of enormous bulk sleeping and snoring loudly. Thor girt on his Belt of Prowess, and was ready for an encounter. But when the giant awoke and rose up, Thor, judging discretion to be the better part of valour, and being for once in his lifetime afraid to use his mallet, contented himself by simply asking the giant his name. "My name is Skrymir," he replied, "but what hast thou done with my glove?" The hall proved to be the giant's glove, and the chamber in which they had taken refuge was its thumb. But afterwards, while the giant snored, Thor launched his mallet at his head three several times. But Skrymir had placed before him a mountain, invisible to Thor, and it was found that the strokes of his mallet had made three glens in the mountain. One of Thor's companions, having challenged any of the giants to run a race with him, was pitted against a young man named Hugi, who outstripped him in running. But it turned out that Hugi was Thought, with which no speed can keep pace. Loki, who was another of Thor's companions, challenged any one to eat as fast as he could. A trough filled with meat



was set on the floor, and Loki began at one end of it, and his antagonist, Logi, at the other. Each ate as quickly as he could till they met in the middle of the trough. But it was found that Loki had only eaten the flesh, whereas Logi had devoured flesh and bone, and the trough itself. Thus Loki was declared to be vanquished, but though he had eaten like hunger itself, Logi was Burning Fire, which consumes all. Thor now challenged any giant to a drinking match. The test of strength was to empty a horn at a single draught. Thor took a long pull at it, and a second, and a third, yet the water was only a little lower than at first. But it turned out that one end of the horn reached to the sea, and Thor's draughts had produced the ebb of the tide. Thor was then challenged to lift a cat, but was only able to raise one of its paws off the floor. The cat was in reality the Midgard serpent, which encompasseth the whole earth. Thor in wrath then defied any giant to wrestle with him. A toothless old woman named Elli entered, and taking hold of him, brought him, after a violent struggle, down on one knee. Elli was Old Age, and will sooner or later lay every one low if he abides her coming.

One of the most beautiful of the Scandinavian myths is the story of the death of Baldur (the Summer). Having been warned by terrible dreams that his life was in danger, he made this known to the Aesir. They at once resolved to use means for ensuring his safety. Frigga exacted an oath from all created things that none of them would harm Baldur. As he was thus considered invulnerable, the Aesir made it their pastime to hurl at him all kinds of deadly missiles, but nothing could hurt him. At this Loki was sorely vexed. Assuming the form of a woman, he extracted from Frigga the secret that only the mistletoe could do Baldur harm, as she had thought it too insignificant to exact an oath from it. Resuming his proper shape, Loki then cut off the mistletoe, and gave it to the blind Hödur (Winter) to throw at Baldur, at the same time guiding his arm so that the twig might hit him. Baldur is hit, and falls. The Aesir are horror-struck. But an attempt may yet be made to recover him. In answer to Frigga's appeal Hermod the Nimble rides on Odin's horse Sleipner (the Wind) to Hel's abode, the place of the departed, and offers her a

ransom for Baldur's restoration to Asgard. She, in order to test whether Baldur is so much beloved as he is said to be, will only consent to give him up on condition that all things in the world—living and lifeless—shall weep for him. The Aesir send messengers throughout the world begging everything to weep for Baldur. All creatures comply with this request except an old hag—suspected to be no other than Loki himself in her shape—who sits in a cavern, and replies to the request made to her:—"Nought gain I by any; let Hel hold her own." And so Baldur returned not. The Aesir bore his dead body to the sea-shore, and thence to the funeral pile on board his ship. The body of Nanna, his heart-broken wife, was consumed along with Baldur's, as was also that of his horse, fully caparisoned. Yet he would rise again after the Twilight of the gods.

Loki's wickedness was visited with swift retribution. In the Greek fable of Prometheus that personage was chained to a rock, where an eagle preyed upon his liver. The punishment of Loki was similar. The gods, having caught him, bound him to three sharp-pointed rocks within a cavern, and suspended over him a serpent, so that its venom should continually drop on his face. The gloom of the picture is relieved by a touching exhibition of conjugal fidelity. His wife takes her place beside him, and receives the venom in a cup ere it touches him. But while from time to time she empties the cup, the drops fall upon him; and the writhings of his body under this torture produce what men call earthquakes. There Loki also awaits the Twilight of the gods.

The notions entertained by the Teutonic races regarding a future state were inspired by their bellicose propensities. As war was their ruling passion, and bravery was reckoned the highest virtue, so only those who fell in battle were admitted to the joys of Valhalla. Fighting, which had been their most honourable occupation on earth, was after death their pastime. Every morning they rode forth to an appointed place of meeting, where they hewed each other to pieces. When the hour of their repast drew near, they remounted their steeds, and returned safe and sound to Valhalla to feast with the Aesir. Though their number was past reckoning, the flesh of the



boar Saehrimner was more than sufficient for them all. It was sodden every day, and was renewed entire every night. This meal of boiled pork was washed down by copious libations of mead, which flowed from the teats of a goat so abundantly as to furnish a supply for all. Odin himself ate nothing, for wine was to him both meat and drink. The Valkyrior virgins hovered over every battlefield, being sent thither by Odin to choose those who were to be slain, and to sway the victory. They also, as was fitting, waited upon the heroes in Valhalla, and kept them in liquor to their hearts' content. With such a future in prospect the Scandinavian warrior welcomed death. Of this the dying words of King Ragnar Lodbrok furnish a striking illustration:—"We are cut to pieces with swords; but this fills me with joy, when I think of the feast that is preparing for me in Odin's palace. Quickly, quickly, seated in the splendid habitation of the gods, we shall drink beer out of curved horns. A brave man fears not to die. I shall utter no timorous words as I enter the hall of Odin."<sup>1</sup> Those who died a natural death, and thus had failed to win an entrance into Valhalla, were consigned to the dominion of Hel, in the region of Niflheim. This corresponded rather to Hades than to what we now mean by the word hell. It was not the place of punishment, but was merely the negation of all that Valhalla was, and as such was regarded with terror and loathing by every heroic soul. Both Valhalla and Hel were destined to pass away, and to be succeeded by Gimli and Naströnd—of which hereafter.

A striking doctrine of the Norse mythology was that of Ragnarök, or the Twilight of the gods. Though the Aesir had been able to keep the powers of evil in restraint, the day was approaching when the progeny of Loki would break loose, and the gods and the world would be destroyed. This catastrophe was ever in prospect. First there shall come a seven years' winter unbroken by any summer, and marked by snow and frost, piercing winds and tempests. Love of gain shall incite parents, children, and brethren to slay each other. The wolf Sküll shall devour the sun, and his brother Hati the moon. The stars shall then vanish, the earth shall be shaken,

<sup>1</sup> Mallet, 105.

the mountains overturned, and the bonds of nature dissolved. The wolf Fenrir now breaks loose. The Midgard serpent, as it writhes to gain the land, causes the sea to overflow the earth. On the waters float the ship Naglfar, constructed of dead men's nails, with the giant Hrim for its steersman. Fire flashes from the eyes and nostrils of the wolf as he advances with open jaws, which extend from earth to heaven. By his side the serpent vomits floods of poison through air and water. Heaven is rent in twain, and the sons of Muspell issue through the breach. At their head comes Surtur, preceded and followed by flaming fire, and brandishing a sword brighter than the sun. As they ride over the bridge Bifröst, it breaks in pieces behind them. They repair to Vigrid's field, where the wolf and the serpent, Loki and the friends of Hel, with the Frost-giants, will offer battle to the gods. But the shining sons of Muspell stand apart on the field of combat, which is a hundred miles in length and breadth.

Meanwhile Heimdall sounds his horn to arouse the Aesir. The ash Yggdrasill begins to shake. Odin consults Mimir at his well how he and his warriors should enter into action. Clad in resplendent armour, All-Father advances at the head of the gods and the heroes of Valhalla, and places himself against the wolf Fenrir. The wolf swallows Odin, but Vidar tears the wolf in pieces. Thor combats the Midgard serpent and slays him, but is himself killed by the venom which it pours forth. Frey encounters Surtur, and for want of his trusty sword is struck down. Tyr is slain by the monster Garm. Loki and Heimdall kill each other. Then Surtur darts fire over the earth, and the whole universe is consumed.

After heaven and earth have thus disappeared, there shall still be abodes for the good and the evil. Of the heavenly mansions Gimli, more brilliant than the sun, is the best; and there the righteous shall dwell in blessedness through endless ages. For the wicked there is Naströnd—the Scandinavian hell. The backs of serpents interlaced like wicker-work compose its walls, while their heads, turned towards its interior, vomit floods of venom on those who are there confined.

But afterwards there shall arise out of the ocean another earth, green and lovely, where the grain shall grow unsown.

Victar the Silent, and Vali the Archer, sons of Odin, shall survive, and neither fire nor flood shall harm them. Evil shall be no more. The Aesir shall dwell on Ida's plain, where Asgard stood of old. There is no mention of any re-appearance of Odin and Thor—those gods of war and strife—but Hoenir shall be there; and the sons of Thor, Modi and Magni, shall come, bringing with them their father's mallet. Baldur and Hödur shall return from the abode of death or Hel. There the Aesir shall sit and converse together under the sacred tree, and call to mind the perils they underwent, and the fight with the wolf Fenrir and Jormundgard, the Midgard serpent. There, too, they shall find in the grass the golden tablets which the Aesir once possessed. Then the powerful Sovereign who rules the universe shall come from on high and give judgment, and establish everlasting peace and order.

During the great conflagration a woman called Lif (Life), and a man called Lifthrasir, lay concealed in a forest. They now come forth, and feed on morning dew; and from them the earth is repopled. And more wonderful still, the Sun, before Fenrir took her, had brought forth a daughter more beautiful than herself, who now treads the same glorious path which her mother had trodden before her.

The foregoing sketch of the Teutonic religion may suffice to indicate its nature. It is evident that its cosmogony was mainly founded on materialism. From pre-existing matter all things were formed. Even Odin himself, as well as the subordinate deities, are represented as having thus come into existence. And when, after the destruction of the universe, a new world arises, this is not ascribed to the fiat of an Almighty Creator, but seems to result from the inherent vitality of matter, typified by the re-appearance of Lif and Lifthrasir, and the new birth of the sun. Of the various myths—striking and beautiful as many of them are—very different interpretations have been given. In common with other heathen systems they have been viewed by many as corruptions of the primitive faith of mankind. Some have maintained that they possess a historical basis, and that Odin and his sons were real personages who, coming from the East, effected the conquest of the northern nations, and in subsequent ages were worshipped as gods.

Cherishing such a belief, all the Teutonic princes are said to have traced their descent from Odin. By a similar method of interpretation the wars of the gods and giants and other mythical beings have been held to symbolize prolonged struggles between the Teutonic and neighbouring races. Physical, astronomical, and ethical explanations of the myths have also been given. The individual who tries to discover the truth among so many conflicting theories will find the result to be only "confusion worse confounded." Investigations into the origin and meaning of the Scandinavian mythology—ingenious and interesting as some of them are—have not yet yielded results which have gained general acceptance. It may be safely asserted that no single system of interpretation will explain the meaning of the whole of these myths. While some of them may have a historical basis, many appear to be impersonations of physical phenomena. Analogies have been traced between the mythology of Scandinavia and those of other countries, especially India, Persia, and Greece; but into this extensive subject we cannot enter. It is not wonderful that affinities between different mythological systems should exist, whether this be accounted for by the supposition of a common origin, or by the identity of the problems concerning the origin and government of the universe, and the destiny of man, the solution of which these systems are intended to embody.

The practical and masterful spirit which pervades the Eddaic myths was doubtless the result of the circumstances of the people. The rigour of the northern climate, the difficulty of procuring for an ever-increasing population the means of subsistence, and the necessity of seeking this in richer lands beyond the seas, developed in the northern nations that energetic and pugnacious character, and that love of personal freedom, which distinguished them from the mild and enervated inhabitants of more favoured regions. Their faith became the complement of their martial character; and the warlike and cruel dispositions attributed to their gods were but the reflection of these qualities in themselves.

The Teutonic religion had its temples and idols, its priests and sacrifices. On its altars were offered the spoils of war and the first-fruits of the earth; and human beings were

immolated on occasions of special disaster. There were three great annual festivals. The first was that of Jul or Yule, which was celebrated at the winter solstice, the commencement of the northern year, in honour of the Sun, whose favour was then supplicated, that the seasons might be propitious, and the crops abundant. The second was observed, for similar reasons, in honour of the Earth at the first quarter of the second month. The third festival was sacred to Odin, and was held at the beginning of spring, in order to entreat the god of battles to give success to the warlike enterprises of his worshippers. These occasions were marked by excessive potations. Healths were first drunk by the chief men in honour of the gods, and then by the rest, who, at the same time, named the particular deity to whom they preferred their requests. When Christianity was introduced, the Church was unable at first to eradicate this custom, and was obliged to tolerate the drinking of the health of the Saviour and the saints, substituted for that of Odin and his sons.<sup>1</sup>

We may feel assured that the doctrines and rites of the Teutonic religion were introduced into England and the south-eastern parts of Scotland by the Saxon invaders from the fifth century onwards, and into other districts of Scotland in much later times by the Danes and Norwegians, who not only ravaged our coasts, but effected permanent settlements in the Orkney, Shetland, and Western Islands, as well as in the northern portion and eastern seaboard of the mainland. In these districts the worship of the Scandinavian deities was doubtless practised till Christianity gained the supremacy. Bede relates that Edwin, king of the Angles of Northumbria, gave thanks to his gods for the birth of his daughter, and that at his court there was a chief priest, which implied the existence of an organized heathen hierarchy; and also that Redwald, king of East Anglia, had in the same temple two altars, on one of which he sacrificed to Christ, and on the other to pagan deities.<sup>2</sup>

Kentigern, the apostle of Strathclyde, when preaching the Christian faith at Hoddam, in Dumfriesshire, is represented by his biographer as thus referring to the religious beliefs

<sup>1</sup> Mallet's "Northern Antiquities," chap. vi.    <sup>2</sup> "Eccles. Hist." bk. ii. chaps. iii. ix. xv.



of his auditors:—"By clear reason he showed that idols were dumb, the vain inventions of men, fitter for the fire than for worship. He showed that the elements in which they believed as deities were creatures and formations adapted by the disposition of their Maker to the use, help, and assistance of men. But Woden, whom they, and especially the Angles, believed to be the chief deity, from whom they derived their origin and to whom the fourth day of the week is dedicated, he asserted with probability to have been a mortal man, king of the Saxons, by faith a pagan, from whom they and many nations have their descent."<sup>1</sup>

Ancient religious customs are tenacious of life. So late as the year 1268 an instance is recorded of the still surviving worship of the god Frea, in Lothian; and fourteen years later the parish priest of Inverkeithing assumed the leading part in the celebration of certain unedifying rites in honour of the same deity. In the latter case less scandal appears to have been raised by the rites themselves than by the official position of the celebrator.<sup>2</sup> Even at the present day there exist amongst us many memorials of Saxon heathenism. Five days of the week are named after its gods—Tuesday being derived from Tiw or Tyr; Wednesday, from Odin or Woden; Thursday, from Thor; Friday, from Frigga, the wife of Odin; and Saturday, from Saetere, a deity of whose supposed attributes little is known. Some of the observances connected with the festival of Yule were transferred to Christmas, which still bears that heathen appellation. Many place-names in England are derived from those of Woden and other Teutonic gods, as Woodnesborough, Thursford, Baldersby.<sup>3</sup> In Scotland we have Thurso, and the family name Thorburn, which are connected with the wielder of the mighty mallet; and probably others, the heathen origin of which may, through phonetic corruption, be less apparent. To the Teutonic, no less than to the Celtic religion and rites are also to be referred many local superstitions which are not yet altogether extinct in our country.

<sup>1</sup> Joceline's "Life of St. Kentigern," c. xxxiii.   <sup>2</sup> Kemble's "Saxons in England," i. 359.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. vol. i. ch. xii.



## CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIANITY INTRODUCED INTO BRITAIN—CONVERSION OF THE  
SOUTHERN PICTS.

Early legends—Bran—St. Paul and other apostles—King Lucius—Establishment of Christianity by Constantine—Diocletian persecution—Arian heresy—King Donald I.—St. Regulus—St. Ninian—Pelagian heresy—St. Palladius—St. Ternan—St. Irichard.

AT what time or by whom the Gospel was first preached in Britain are questions which, though profoundly interesting, cannot be answered. Legends and conjectures referring to this event there are in abundance. Bran, father of the British prince Caradoc, or Caractacus, who gallantly, though unsuccessfully, fought against the Roman invaders of his country for several years about the middle of the first century, is said to have been carried captive to Rome, to have been there converted to the faith of Christ, and to have preached it in Britain on his return.

Tradition even asserts that four of our Lord's apostles—Peter, James, Simon Zelotes, and Paul—were the first evangelists of this island. The apostle of the Gentiles is, moreover, said to have ordained Aristobulus, who is mentioned in his Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 10), and to have sent him as a missionary to Britain. If we are to believe the monks of Glastonbury, who were doubtless the authors of the story, that abbey had the honour of being founded by Joseph of Arimathea, and was further consecrated by becoming the repository of his dust. It is scarcely necessary to say that these legends are one and all of them either utterly baseless or incapable of proof. They were for the most part invented many centuries after the period to which they refer; and any grounds of probability which may at first view seem to attach to some of them—as, for example, to the conjecture that St. Paul extended his missionary journeyings to Britain—altogether disappear on closer examination.<sup>1</sup>

It is probable that the first heralds of the Cross in our country followed the footsteps of the Roman army. Moreover, as

<sup>1</sup> See Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 22–24.

Christianity continued to spread throughout various portions of the Empire, so in course of time converts would be found in the Imperial legions which had been raised in these localities. By these, when sent into Britain, some knowledge of their religion could hardly fail to be communicated to the native population, under the impulse of that zeal to publish the Glad Tidings which was in primitive times so marked a characteristic of Christ's disciples. But though we may believe that there were many Christians in Britain, there is no actual proof of the existence of any during the first two centuries of our era.<sup>1</sup> There is, indeed, a legend that a certain Lucius, king of Britain, sent a letter to Pope Eleutherus, who flourished in the last quarter of the second century, asking "that he might be made a Christian by his command," and it is apparently implied that the king's request was granted. This story appears to have originated in Rome during the fifth or sixth century. It was unknown to Gildas, our oldest British historian, but was repeated by Bede, Nennius, and various monkish chroniclers, with successive additions, till in its full-grown form it asserted the overthrow of paganism at that early date, the establishment of a complete hierarchy, and other particulars equally incredible. To say nothing of the long interval of three centuries or more between the supposed event and the first mention made of it, it is certain that a "king of Britain" was, at the period referred to, an impossible dignitary; while the account given by Bede and others is burdened with errors, both in dates and facts, of so manifest a kind as to carry its own refutation, and to render further notice of it unnecessary.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest authentic reference to the existence of Christians in this island occurs in a treatise of Tertullian, in which he asserts that "places in Britain, inaccessible to the Romans, were subjugated to Christ."<sup>3</sup> This appears to have been written about

<sup>1</sup> Claudia, mentioned by St. Paul (2 Tim. iv. 21), along with Pudens, as a Christian, has been conjectured to be the same with Claudia, the newly married wife of Pudens, mentioned by Martial (iv. 13, xi. 53) as a "foreigner" and "sprung from Britons." (See Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," &c. i. 22.) Pomponia Græcina, accused and acquitted A.D. 57, before her husband Aulus Plautius, who had returned from Britain, of "a foreign superstition," is assumed to have been both a Christian and a Briton. (Ibid. 22, Tacitus "An." xiii. 32.)

<sup>2</sup> See Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 24.

<sup>3</sup> "Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita."—*Advers. Jud.* vii., Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 3.

the year 208, which coincides with the date of the expedition of the Emperor Severus against the rebellious tribes of Caledonia. Though the language of Tertullian may possibly be chargeable with some degree of rhetorical exaggeration—to say nothing of its vagueness—we may yet safely infer from it that at the beginning of the third century the religion of Christ had not only made considerable progress within the Roman province, but had even penetrated amongst the independent tribes. These could scarcely be other than the inhabitants of Caledonia, who alone at that period had not submitted to the Roman yoke. Origen, writing about thirty years later than Tertullian, confirms the probability of a wide diffusion of the Gospel in this island. “When,” he asks, “has the land of Britain, before the advent of Christ, agreed to the religion of one God?” And again, “The power of the Lord the Saviour is even with those who in Britain are separated from our country.”<sup>1</sup> From the commencement of the fourth century onwards there is undoubted evidence of the existence of an organized Christian Church in Britain. The Diocletian persecution in the beginning of that century, which was so severe in other parts of the Empire, was scarcely felt in Britain. Yet an old tradition that Alban, a layman, suffered martyrdom for Christ at Verolamium, now St. Alban’s, is referred by Gildas to the time of this persecution, and Alban is commonly regarded as Britain’s first martyr.<sup>2</sup> When Constantine established Christianity as the religion of the empire, it would also become nominally the religion of Roman Britain. It is recorded that there were present at the Council of Arles, in the year 314, three British bishops, besides a presbyter and deacon, the names of some of whom are mentioned. York and London are clearly stated to have been two of the cities from which these bishops came—York being mentioned first probably in consequence of its connection with the Emperor Constantine. In the year 359 there were British bishops at the Council of Ariminum; and it is interesting to learn that when the Emperor Constantius ordered victuals and lodging to be supplied to the bishops—upwards of 400 in number—whom he had brought thither, and when this allowance was refused as unbecoming by the general body, who preferred to live at their own

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, “Councils,” i. 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 6. 28–33.

charges, it was accepted by three out of the number of British bishops present, on account of their poverty, though they had rejected a contribution offered to them by their brethren.<sup>1</sup> When the Church was agitated by the doctrines of Arius, the British bishops in various ways, from the year 325 to 363, indicated their agreement with the orthodox side.<sup>2</sup>

The vague statement of Tertullian, already quoted, is the only authentic notice which may be held specially to refer to the existence or progress of Christianity in Scotland till near the end of the fourth century. There are, however, certain legends which, though now discredited, occupied during several centuries an important place in the national sentiment and belief, and for that reason claim to be here noticed. Though Tertullian's words imply, at the very least, that in the beginning of the third century the religion of Christ had converts among the independent tribes of the north, neither the Montanist Father nor any other early writer gives an account of the way in which this was brought about. But what history failed to record fable was ready to supply. This task was first taken up by John of Fordun, who wrote his Chronicle in the latter part of the fourteenth century. In that work he states that in the year 203, and during the reign of Pope Victor I., "the Scots began to embrace the Catholic faith;" and he quotes some old Latin verses to a like effect, from which it may be inferred that he was not the inventor of the story, but only repeated a current tradition. These verses have been thus translated.—

"After Christ's death two hundred years and three,  
His true faith first in Scotland shed her rays;  
Then the first Victor filled the Papal See,  
Who died a martyr in Severus' days."<sup>3</sup>

Not only is the historian's chronology here erroneous—for Victor's reign ended in the year 197—but, as we have seen, our country was not called Scotland till many centuries after the above-mentioned date, and it is almost certain that there were no Scots inhabiting it at so early a period. Legends have ever a tendency to grow. Hector Boece—that master of fable

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 7-10.

<sup>3</sup> Fordun, "Chronicle," lib. ii. cap. xxxv. ("Historians of Scotland," iv. 57, 392).

—improves upon Fordun's statement by informing us that Donald I., king of the Scots, sent ambassadors to Pope Victor to request from him instructors in the truths of the Gospel, and that thus he himself, his family, and his nobles became Christians in the year 203.<sup>1</sup> The story is still further amplified by others. This Donald the First is the twenty-seventh of forty Scottish kings preceding Fergus, son of Erc, who never existed except in the imagination of their historians, and on the walls of the picture gallery of Holyrood Palace.<sup>2</sup> The legend bears a suspicious resemblance to that of Lucius, king of Britain, already noticed. It was probably invented in order to place Scotland on a footing of approximate equality with England as regards the antiquity of its Church, and forms a parallel to a similar process which had for its object to prove Scotland's antiquity as a kingdom. There will be occasion to refer again to the subject in connection with the mission of Palladius.

Another legend which long held its ground in Scottish history is that of ST. REGULUS, and is connected with the foundation of St. Andrews. There are several versions of it.<sup>3</sup> The oldest is referred to the year 1165. Another is believed to have been derived from the Register of the priory of St. Andrews, now lost, and in its present form belongs to the year 1279; but its postscript asserts that the document was written by one Thana, son of Dudabrach, for King Pherath, son of Bergeth, in the town of Meikle. Pherath was the second last king of the Picts. Another version of the legend is given in the Aberdeen Breviary, and Fordun and subsequent historians relate it. Passing over the first part of the legend, which connects itself with the general tradition concerning the martyrdom of the apostle Andrew at Patras in Greece, the remainder may be here given according to the St. Andrews edition, which supplies many curious details, but is encumbered by a profusion of pious expletives. The substance of it is as follows:—

<sup>1</sup> "Scot. Hist.," bk. v., fol. 89.

<sup>2</sup> The reader who is curious in such matters will find a portrait (it is to be hoped a correct likeness!) of the veritable Donald I. in Leslie's "*De Origine Scotorum, Romæ, MDLXXVIII.*" (reprinted 1675), p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Skene's "*Chronicles of the Picts and Scots*," 188, 183, 375.



In the year 345 the Emperor Constantius collected a great army to lay waste the city of Patras, for the purpose of avenging the martyrdom of St. Andrew and removing his relics. Before the Emperor's entrance into the city an angel appeared to the holy men who guarded the relics, and commanded Regulus, the bishop, with his clergy, to go to the sarcophagus, in which were kept the bones of the apostle, and to take thence three fingers of his right hand, a part of one of the arm bones, the pan of one of the knees, and a tooth. They accordingly took these portions of the relics, and concealed them. The next day the Emperor came with his army, laid waste the city and province, and carried off the shrine containing the rest of the relics to Rome, and thence to Constantinople. The scene of the legend now shifts to Britain.

At that time Hungus, son of Fenlon (Fergus), king of the Picts, assembled an army against Athelstane, king of the Saxons, and encamped at the mouth of the river Tyne. Before the two armies met, St. Andrew appeared to Hungus in a dream, and promised that he should be victorious, and that the place in which the apostle's relics—which were to be brought to his kingdom—should be deposited would be held in honour to the end of the world. Hungus and his people then swore that they would for ever venerate St. Andrew if they should be victorious. A battle was fought. The Saxons were put to flight with great slaughter, and Athelstane's head was taken off and carried to a place called Ardhinnichun, at the Queen's Harbour.

Soon afterwards an angel appeared to St. Regulus, and commanded him to sail to the north with the relics of St. Andrew, and to erect a church in honour of the apostle wherever his vessel should be wrecked. He and his companions sailed northwards, and, after encountering many perils, at length landed in the territory of the Picts at a place called Muckros, or *nemus porcorum* (Swines' Wood), and now Kilrymont,<sup>1</sup> having been wrecked there. Leaving two of their number in

<sup>1</sup> The first form of this name was "Ceannrighmonaigh," or "head of the king's mount;" when a church had been founded there it came to be called "Cillrighmonaidh," and this was corrupted into Kilrymont. There is still Balrymont in its neighbourhood.



charge of the place, they then proceeded with the relics to Forteviot, where they found three sons of King Hungus, who, because they were anxious about the life of their father, then absent on an expedition to Argyll, gave the tenth part of Forteviot to God and St. Andrew. Thence they went to Moneclatu, which is now called Monichi, and there Finchen, wife of King Hungus, was delivered of a daughter, called Monren, who was afterwards buried at Kilrymont; and the queen gave the place and the royal hall to God and St. Andrew. They then crossed the mountains called Moneth (the Grampians), and came to Doldacha, which is now called Chondrochedalvan (Kindrochet in Mar). There Hungus, returning from his expedition, met them; and he and all his nobles prostrated themselves before the relics; and this place also was given to God and St. Andrew, and a church built there. The king, with the holy men, then returned across the Moneth to Monichi, and there erected a church to God and St. Andrew; and thence to Forteviot, where they did the same. Hungus then went with the holy men to Kilrymont, and gave a great part of that place to God and St. Andrew for the erection of churches and oratories; and twelve stones were erected around the place.<sup>1</sup> He afterwards gave them a large territory as a *parochia*. It was bounded by the two seas called Ishundenema and Sletheuma, and by a line running from Largo through Ceres to Hyatnouhten Machchirb, which is now called Hadnachten (Naughton). Hungus then gave a memorial of his gift of Kilrymont to God and St. Andrew by the symbol of a turf which he offered on the altar in presence of the Pictish nobles; and the holy men built seven churches in Kilrymont in honour of as many saints.

According to the oldest edition of the legend, Regulus meets Hungus at a gate called Matha, "where the king's hall now is," and the king gives that place and city (Kilrymont) to God and St. Andrew, that it may be the head and mother of all the churches in the Pictish kingdom. Regulus and his companions dwell there till the end of their lives, and are buried there. He is said in this version to have been a monk and an abbot, and to have had the third part of all

<sup>1</sup> The places mentioned are those where churches were dedicated to St. Andrew.

Scotia in his charge, and ruled it through his abbeys. In the later edition of the legend he is called a bishop. The version given in the Aberdeen Breviary states that Regulus sent his companions to preach the Gospel in the kingdom of the Picts and in that of the Britons in Scotia, by whom innumerable multitudes were converted to Christ and baptized.

Fordun divides this legend into two parts, and applies the first, which relates the coming of Regulus and his reception by the Pictish king, to a Hungus who reigned in the fourth century, thus making his history agree so far with the legend. The remainder, referring to the victory gained over the Saxons under the patronage of St. Andrew, he applies to another King Hungus who reigned in the ninth century.<sup>1</sup> But in the old lists of the Pictish kings there is no Hungus occurring in the fourth century, though Fordun introduces such a personage in a list given by himself in his History. Moreover, it is clear that all the incidents narrated in the legend in connection with Hungus refer to one period and the same monarch.

There were, however, two Pictish kings both of whom were called Hungus or Angus, and both were sons of Urgust or Fergus. The first reigned from 731 to 761; the second in the century following, and died in the year 834. The latter of these is stated in an old list of Pictish kings to have built Kilrymont. Pinkerton, and Mr. Joseph Robertson also, considered this to be the Hungus of the legend.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Skene, however, adduces weighty reasons for the more probable supposition that this foundation of St. Andrews took place under the first Hungus.<sup>3</sup> Let the following facts suffice:—Eadbert, king of Northumbria, made an expedition against the Picts in 740, that is, during the reign of this Hungus. In 736 the same Hungus made war against Dalriada, and took Dunadd, its capital. These events curiously harmonize with those of the legend. The year 736 is thus probably the true date of this "foundation" of St. Andrews by King Hungus, and of the placing of the kingdom under the patronage of St. Andrew,

<sup>1</sup> Fordun, lib. ii., c. 46–48; lib. iv., c. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton's "Enquiry," i. 309, ed. 1814; "Scottish Abbeys and Cathedrals," by Jos. Robertson, in *Quart. Rev.*, June, 1849, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Antig. Scot.*, iv. 309; "Notice of Early Eccl. Settlements at St Andrews," by W. F. Skene, p. 308.

it having been placed under that of St. Peter twenty-six years earlier by another king of the Picts.

If we reject the legend of St. Regulus bringing the bones of St. Andrew to Kilrymont in the fourth century as being nothing more than a myth, the question still remains, Whence were the relics brought, and how did the veneration for St. Andrew originate? The connection of Kilrymont with that veneration is accounted for by Dr. Skene<sup>1</sup> as follows:—In those early ages the relics of saints and martyrs were greatly venerated, and strenuous efforts were made to collect what were believed to be such. Acca, bishop of Hexham, in Northumberland, was very zealous in this kind of work. Wilfrid, his predecessor, had founded the church of Hexham, and dedicated it to St. Andrew, because he believed it was by that apostle's aid he had succeeded in turning the people of Northumbria from the church of Columba to that of Rome. Acca, being in full sympathy with Wilfrid's tendencies, procured and placed in the church of Hexham the supposed relics of St. Andrew. It may seem a "far cry" from Hexham to Kilrymont. It happened, however, that in the year 732 Acca was driven from his see; and he is believed to have fled to, and founded a bishopric among, the Picts and in Fife, though he afterwards returned to Hexham and died there. It is certainly a striking coincidence that four years after Acca's flight St. Andrews appears to have been "founded," and the relics of the apostle brought thither. And yet further, while the church of Hexham was dedicated to St. Andrew, there were connected with it two chapels, one of which was dedicated to St. Michael, and the other to St. Mary; and two chapels at St. Andrews are said to have had the same dedications respectively. When the Scots, so late as the twelfth century, made hostile expeditions into England, and burnt and ravaged churches and monasteries, they always refrained from injuring the monastery of Hexham, from their veneration for its patron saint, bishops, and confessors.

Another question still remains to be dealt with, Who was St. Regulus? In answering this question we must turn back to a period long anterior to the eighth century. While the

<sup>1</sup> *Proceed. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, 312.

foregoing is probably the true account of the foundation at that period of a church at St. Andrews, served by secular clergy, it appears that a monastic church had been established there in the sixth century, and that it was with this foundation the historical Regulus was connected. Among the followers of St. Columba in Ireland was a Regulus, or Riagail, of Muicinis, an island in Loch Derg. Muicinis means "the isle of swine." According to the legend, the old name of St. Andrews was Muicross, or "the promontory of swine." Another coincidence is, that while Regulus of St. Andrews is commemorated on the 17th day of October, Riagail of Muicinis' day is the 16th of the same month, there being the same confusion in celebrations of those two days that occurs in other cases, when the 16th day of the month is also the 17th day before the Kalends of the next month. It may therefore be concluded that Riagail of Muicinis came to Scotland, and founded a Columban church or monastery at Muicross, or was connected with one which, as we shall see, Columba, or his friend Cainnech, had founded there; and that his name was transferred to the fabulous Regulus of the time of King Hungus.<sup>1</sup>

So much acceptance did the legend of St. Regulus meet with in Scotland that in 1320 the Scottish barons stated in their celebrated letter to Pope Boniface VIII. that Jesus Christ brought the Scottish nation, "who were settled in the uttermost borders of the earth, almost first to his most holy faith, and wished to confirm them in the faith by no other than his first apostle Andrew, whom they wished to be always over them as their patron."<sup>2</sup> This is clearly an allusion to the legend of St. Regulus, and no mention is made of Ninian or Columba, by whose agency the Picts had really been converted.

The legend of St. Regulus probably originated in the rivalry which prevailed between different ecclesiastical centres. After St. Andrews became the head of the "Scottish" Church, which superseded the Pictish Church in the ninth century, its clergy evidently wished to establish for it an antiquity higher than that of Candida Casa, Glasgow, or Iona. With this view they elaborated the legend; and events which took place in the

<sup>1</sup> "Celtic Scotland," ii. 266, 271.

<sup>2</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 292.



eighth century were assigned to Regulus and transferred to the fourth century.

At St. Andrews there still remains the tower of St. Regulus, or St. Rule, by which that saint is commemorated. This tower was long supposed to have been erected in the fourth century, the time of the fabulous Regulus.<sup>1</sup> More recently it was assigned to the era of King Hungus, or to the seventh or eighth century.<sup>2</sup> It is now agreed by competent judges that it formed the tower of the first cathedral, built between 1127 and 1144 by Bishop Robert, who also founded the Augustinian priory beside it.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of the fourth century there comes into view the earliest Scottish evangelist of whose name and work we possess any authentic record. ST. NINIAN, to whom this honour belongs, is not indeed mentioned by any writer contemporary with him.<sup>4</sup> Our first authority for his existence is Bede,<sup>5</sup> who was not born till about two centuries and a half after his death. Yet as the monk of Jarrow had ample means of ascertaining the leading events of Ninian's life, we may accept his account as entirely trustworthy; and though that account is exceedingly brief, we may nevertheless be thankful for it, since it places clearly before us one who was no mythical personage, but a veritable messenger of glad tidings to a large portion of our country.

Another source of information concerning Ninian is Ailred's Life of him, which was, however, not written till the twelfth century.<sup>6</sup> Ailred appears to have been educated along with Henry, son of King David I. of Scotland, and to have been in his early years attached to the court of that monarch, in whose kingdom Cumberland and Northumberland were then included, and whose subject he therefore was. In 1143 he became abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Rievaulx in Yorkshire, of which he had formerly been a monk. He was the author of numerous

<sup>1</sup> Martine's "Reliquiæ Divi Andræ," 182.

<sup>2</sup> Lyon's "Hist. of St. Andrews," ii. 163.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Joseph Robertson in *Quarterly Review*, June, 1849, p. 120.

<sup>4</sup> There were several forms of Ninian's name—Nynias or Nynia, Nyniga, Ninianus. Irish writers, giving the prefix of honour or affection *mo*, called him Monenn, Maoinneann, and Monein. By the common people of Scotland he was known as St. Ringan. Other forms used in England were St. Trinyon and St. Triman.—*Forbes' ed. of Joceline's "Life of Ninian,"* 256.

<sup>5</sup> "Eccle. Hist.," bk. iii. c. 4.

<sup>6</sup> First printed by Pinkerton in "Vitæ Antiquæ Sanctorum Scotiæ," 1789, now included in "Historians of Scotland," vol. v., ed. and transl. by Bishop Forbes.

works in history and theology, and died in 1166.<sup>1</sup> His account of Ninian is professedly based on that given by Bede, and on an earlier Book of the saint's life and miracles which, he says, "had been told by those who came before him truly, indeed, but in too barbarous a style," and which he "is to bring forth into the clear light of Latin diction." At what period this earlier Life had been written he does not indicate, though on this its value would greatly depend. It is known that Ailred oftener than once visited Galloway, so that notwithstanding the long interval of seven centuries which elapsed between Ninian's time and his own, he may have heard traditions concerning him in the district which was the scene of his earliest labours. Be this as it may, and whatever may have been the date of the older Life on which he founds, the value of Ailred's work is small. It contains few facts which had not been already recorded by Bede, while much of it is occupied with a grandiloquent account of miracles said to have been wrought by his hero, some of which are but repetitions of those ascribed to other saints, such marvels being of constant occurrence in ancient hagiology. There was, further, an Irish Life of Ninian, which Ussher quotes from, and states to have existed in his day, but which has since disappeared. As it is said to have been full of falsehoods, the loss of it may be the less regretted.<sup>2</sup>

The precise date of Ninian's birth is unknown, but as he built his famous church—to be presently referred to—about the end of the fourth century, the year 360, to which the event is commonly assigned, may be approximately correct. He was born near the Solway Firth, but whether in Cumberland or Galloway cannot be determined with certainty. Ailred, however, seems to indicate Ninian's native district as that in which he commenced his work, which renders it probable that his birthplace was in Galloway. His father is said to have been a king, which may mean that he was a chieftain in the district in which he resided. He is further said to have been a Christian, and to have had Ninian baptized in his infancy—statements which may well be credited, since Christianity was by this time prevalent in Roman Britain, in which Galloway was included.

Ailred praises Ninian's piety as a boy, his pleasant

<sup>1</sup> Forbes' ed. of Ailred's "Life of Ninian," vi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. iv.



manners and blameless conduct as a young man, his "reverence about churches," his great love for the brethren, and his earnest study of the Holy Scriptures. In order to obtain more perfect instruction in the faith, he made a pilgrimage to Rome—an undertaking not uncommon with British Christians at that period, nor difficult to be accomplished so long as the power of the empire was sufficient for the protection of its subjects. Entering Italy by way of the Gallican Alps, and arriving in the capital, he was kindly received, we are told, by the Pope—probably Pope Damasus—who handed him over to teachers able to instruct him in the doctrines and discipline of the Church. He is said to have lived in the city for many years. Though Rome had then ceased to be the residence of the emperors, it was the capital of Western Christendom, the resort of distinguished men, and a principal centre of religious life. A lengthened sojourn there must have had a formative influence on the plastic mind of a young man engaged in theological studies. The Church in its conflict with paganism had by this time practically gained the victory, and was in its turn beginning to yield to worldly influences, as an antidote to which the monastic life was being adopted by multitudes. The distinction between bishops and presbyters, which had begun to be made before this period, though unknown in the primitive church—the two words being used in the New Testament interchangeably, as denoting the same office—was ever increasing. Bishops were now considered to be the successors of the apostles, though the latter could have no successors in respect of those things which constituted the essential features of their office—their being the chosen witnesses of our Lord's resurrection, divinely inspired to found and organize His church and declare His will, and empowered to work miracles. The heathen temples in Rome were by this time mostly deserted, and some of them had been converted into churches. Many of the basilicas or court-houses also had been adapted to Christian worship, while the more devout of the people repaired for this purpose to the catacombs, which were hallowed by the bones of the martyrs;<sup>1</sup> and superstition, under numerous phases, was steadily advancing towards that baneful supremacy which it eventually achieved.

<sup>1</sup> See Forbes' edition of Ailred's "Life of Ninian," 35.

Ninian is said to have been consecrated a bishop by the Roman pontiff, who at the same time sent the young Briton to execute his office in the western parts of his native land. In his journey homewards he visited Tours, in order to see the celebrated St. Martin who then flourished there. Martin was a firm upholder of orthodoxy against the Arian party in the Church, and was no less zealous in promoting the practice of monachism. This institution had been founded in Egypt by St. Anthony. His followers were at first solitary recluses, who were induced to forsake the haunts of their fellow-men by the hope of being thus enabled to cultivate a higher type of piety than they could attain amid the distractions and temptations of the world—a hope founded on an erroneous principle, and in the majority of cases doomed to disappointment. In course of time, abandoning the practice of occupying separate places of retreat, the monks began to form themselves into communities, in which they were bound by the most stringent vows. After monachism came to be adopted by vast numbers in Rome and Italy, under the influence of Athanasius and others, the system was introduced into Gaul by St. Martin, who in the year 361 founded the first monastery in that country at Poitiers, and another in 372 near Tours. The life of Oriental monks was mainly spent in passive contemplation and severe asceticism; but the Western monasteries were in many cases the homes of busy labour, schools of Christian instruction, and centres of missionary enterprise for the enlightenment of the surrounding heathen.<sup>1</sup> It can hardly be doubted that Ninian's visit to St. Martin of Tours would have an important influence on his future plans for the evangelization of his countrymen, and to this is to be traced the subsequent establishment by him of a monastery on the shores of the Solway, to be noticed in a subsequent portion of this sketch.

On his return to his native land Ninian would find it the scene of war and devastation, as indeed it must have been during the greater part of his previous life, and continued to be till his death, and long after it. We have seen that

<sup>1</sup> Monks, as being governed by the "religio," or monastic rule, were called the "religious;" other clergy, "secular."

in the year 360, the supposed date of his birth, the Picts and Scots attacked the northern Roman territory, and, reinforced afterwards by the Saxons, held possession of it up to Hadrian's Wall for several years, till repulsed by Theodosius, who restored at the same time the Wall of Antoninus as the Roman frontier. These events must have happened during Ninian's boyhood; and a similar state of matters—hostile tribes alternately advancing against the Britons and retreating before the imperial forces—continued, with few intervals of tranquillity, till the year 410, when the Roman dominion ceased in Britain. After this, though the incidents are imperfectly known, it would appear that there ensued between the rival nations a period of fierce and protracted warfare for supremacy, till, in the sixth century, the British kingdom of Strathclyde emerges into the light of history. The northern shores of the Solway Firth, by reason of their retired situation, may have suffered less than other districts from hostile incursions. Whether for this reason, or because Galloway, inhabited by a Pictish people, was his native district, Ninian chose to commence his work there. It would appear, however, that he also extended his labours throughout the territory stretching northwards to the Forth and Clyde. We shall afterwards find traces of him at Glasgow.<sup>1</sup> His work is described by his biographer as “rooting up what had been ill planted, scattering what had been ill gathered, casting down what had been ill built, purging the minds of the faithful from all their errors, and beginning to lay in them the foundations of faith unfeigned.” While this language indicates the previous existence of Christianity in the district, it also renders it probable that it had sunk into a corrupt, as it could scarcely be other than in a decaying, condition while Valentia was being perpetually overrun by heathen Celts and Saxons.

One of the miracles ascribed to Ninian was performed on the person of a king in this region called Tuduval, on whom blindness had been inflicted as a punishment for his opposition to the teaching of the saint. Ninian, after a suitable reproof, restored his sight, and was consequently ever afterwards loved and venerated by him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fordun, bk. iii., c. x.

<sup>2</sup> “Vit Nin.” c. iv.

Ninian erected a church of stone in the territory occupied, according to Ptolemy,<sup>1</sup> by the tribe of the Novantæ, and in a town called by the same author Loukopibia. This name has been supposed by some to be a corruption of the Greek words *Leuk' oikidia*, meaning White House. The Latin name of the site of Ninian's church was Candida Casa, of like signification, which Bede and others have derived from the circumstance that that edifice was built of stone, and would thus present a contrast to the black huts of the natives. But since the place had been previously called Loukopibia, it was probably not the church itself which was called Candida Casa, at least in the first instance, but the town or site where it was erected. Candida Casa may have been the original name, and this may have been translated by Ptolemy into the equivalent Greek words. In Saxon speech the name was translated into Witerna, or Whitherne, now Whithorn. It is a disputed question whether the church of Ninian was built at the modern town of Whithorn, on the spot now occupied by the ruins of the cathedral of Galloway, or at the Isle of Whithorn, three miles distant from it, where are the remains of a chapel of a date long posterior to his time, but supposed to occupy the site of his church. Tradition is in favour of the latter locality. On the other hand, the circumstance that the town of Whithorn became in subsequent ages a celebrated resort of pilgrims, in consequence of the miracles said to have been wrought there by Ninian's relics—while there is no record of any translation of the saint's bones—would seem to indicate that place as the site of his church, in which, according to Bede and Ailred, he was buried. The question cannot now be determined with certainty. A cave under a cliff at the sea-side, in the parish of Glasserton, called St. Ninian's Cave, is traditionally asserted to have been a resort of the saint for his private devotions. The tradition is probably correct. He may have followed the example of his friend St. Martin, who had similar places of retirement for himself and his disciples. We shall meet with other instances

<sup>1</sup> The part of the Geography of Ptolemy (who wrote about the middle of the second century) relating to Scotland is printed by Pinkerton in his "Enquiry," vol. i. app. i., and in Giles' "History of the Ancient Britons," vol. ii.



of caves frequented for a like purpose by early Scottish saints.<sup>1</sup>

We have Bede's authority for the statement that Ninian built his church of stone "in a way unusual among the Britons." These words, however, do not bear out the interpretation of their meaning given by Ailred and others, that before that time no churches in Britain had been constructed of stone. We may believe that the inhabitants of rural districts usually built their sacred, as well as their domestic, edifices of timber, and that in Galloway there may have been no stone church before Ninian's time. But as we know, from remains still existing, that in British cities during the Roman dominion edifices were built of stone or brick, there is no reason for supposing that churches would be constructed of less durable materials. We are further told by Ailred that Ninian sought and obtained from St. Martin masons for the erection of his church, because in this, as in other things, he desired to imitate the Roman model. A similar fact is affirmed in the history of the Saxon Church. Benedict Biscop is said to have brought masons from Gaul to build a stone church after the manner of the Romans.<sup>2</sup> We shall find that the Pictish king Nectan requested the Abbot of Jarrow to send him architects for a like purpose. Since Ailred wrote several centuries after these incidents, it is possible that the similar procedure which he attributes to Ninian was merely a fictitious repetition of them. The statement that he brought masons from Tours, though not mentioned by Bede, is not, however, in itself improbable, if we take into account the active intercourse which was then maintained between Britain and the Continent.

While Ninian was occupied with the erection of his church and the superintendence of artisans, whether Gallic or British, he heard that St. Martin had "passed from earth to heaven," and he therefore dedicated it to the honour of his patron. This, and the dedication of another church at Canterbury to St. Martin, were exceptions to the British practice, which pre-

<sup>1</sup> See Muir's "Characteristics of Old Church Architecture," 57; "Ecclesiological Notes," &c., by the same author, 229; Forbes' edition of Ailred's "Life of Ninian," 269.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes' edition of Ailred's "Life of Ninian," 266.

vailed till towards the end of the seventh century, of not dedicating a church to any saint already dead, but of calling it by the name of its living founder.<sup>1</sup> The death of St. Martin, whose memory is still preserved among us by the name of our Martinmas term, took place, according to the best authorities, in the year 397. This date determines that of the erection of Ninian's church, as it must also nearly synchronize with the commencement of his evangelistic labours.

It would appear that Ninian, following the example of Martin of Tours, introduced into our country the practice of the monastic life. There is, indeed, no mention made by Bede or Ailred of the existence of a monastery at Candida Casa. The latter author, however, informs us that many nobles and people of middle rank sent their sons to be trained by Ninian in sacred learning, and there is ample evidence that within a century after his death there was a flourishing monastery at Whitherne; and as it was connected with Ninian's name, there is no reason to doubt that it had been founded by him. It was called *Magnum Monasterium*, and also the Monastery of Rosnat—a Celtic word said to mean “the promontory of learning”—and Alba, while its Irish name was *Futerna*, the equivalent of Whitherne. We read of a number of Irish captives, both male and female, who, when carried to Britain by pirates, were sent by the king of the territory, at the queen's intercession, to be trained in the monastery of Rosnat. The monastic discipline which Ninian introduced into North Britain was transplanted to Ireland by his disciples. Cairnech, son of Sarran, a king of the Britons, is said in an old legend to have been a successor of Ninian as bishop and abbot of Candida Casa, and, having gone to Erin, to have been the first monk of that island. Be this as it may, it is certain that many youths from the north of Ireland resorted to Whitherne for Christian education and monastic training, and on their return home founded flourishing monasteries, and wielded extensive influence in their several localities.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest work of Ninian was his conversion of the

<sup>1</sup> See Haddan and Stubbs, “Councils,” i. 155.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes' edition of Ailred's “Life of Ninian,” xlii.; “Celtic Scotland,” ii. 46-48; Haddan and Stubbs, “Councils,” i. 120.



southern Picts. Bede, while narrating Columba's labours among the northern Picts, who had previously been pagans, informs us that the southern Picts had long before abandoned idolatry and embraced the Christian faith, through the preaching of the Word by Bishop Ninian; and also that the northern were separated from the southern Picts by lofty and rugged ranges of mountains.<sup>1</sup> It is thus evident that the scene of Ninian's labours was the country extending from the Forth to the Grampians; the inhabitants of the territory south of the Wall of Antoninus, who were mainly Romanized Britons, having been already to a certain extent Christianized. We have seen that two centuries earlier some Christians were to be found amongst the independent tribes north of the Forth and Clyde. Nevertheless, either they must have been few in number, or the new religion had not maintained its ground in troublous times, for the Picts were for the most part pagans when Ninian commenced to preach the Gospel to them. We shall find that St. Patrick, who was nearly contemporary with Ninian, in his letter to Caroticus speaks of the "apostate Picts." While such language suggests the existence of an earlier Christianity among them, it also shows that they had fallen away from it. No details of Ninian's operations are given by Bede. Ailred, indeed, informs us that he was accompanied by many holy brethren, and that, as the effect of his preaching, the faith was received and errors renounced; that temples were cast down and churches erected; that rich and poor, young and old, and mothers with their children came in crowds to be baptized; and that Ninian ordained presbyters, consecrated bishops, distributed other ecclesiastical dignities, and divided the whole land into parishes.<sup>2</sup> But Ailred's language here is evidently framed in accordance with the ideas and institutions of the twelfth century, and in several particulars cannot be accepted as true. It is known that very few bishops ever existed amongst the southern Picts; generally there was not more than one at a time; and it is certain that parishes were not formed till many centuries after Ninian's day. Even Bede's brief account, however, indicates that his success must have been great, and that his labours resulted in the virtual

<sup>1</sup> "Ecc. Hist.," iii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Life of St. Ninian," chap. vi.

overthrow of paganism in the Scottish Lowlands. It will be readily understood that any "conversion" of a whole people in the course of a few years, and through the efforts of one man, must have been of a superficial character, and that there remained abundant room for subsequent missionary operations amongst the people said to have been thus converted. There is, indeed, evidence that an extensive relapse into heathenism afterwards took place throughout the districts which had been the scene of Ninian's labours.

Ailred informs us that after the conclusion of his work amongst the southern Picts Ninian spent the rest of his days at Candida Casa; and both he and Bede state that he died there, and, as has already been mentioned, that his remains were buried in the church which he had built. They do not, however, mention the time of his death. This is commonly stated to have taken place on the 16th September, 432; but there is no authority for that being the true date, which is unknown. The Irish life of Ninian, quoted by Ussher, asserts that his last years were spent in Ireland, and that he founded a church at Cluain Conaire, in Leinster.<sup>1</sup> But though there is evidence that under the name of Monenn he was commemorated there on the 16th September, this fact, in whatever way it may be accounted for, cannot outweigh the testimony of Bede and Ailred, to say nothing of the unvarying Scottish tradition, that he died and was buried at Candida Casa. Though the date of his death cannot be ascertained, yet as a work so extensive as his must have required a lengthened period for its accomplishment, we may conclude that he outlived the termination of the Roman dominion in Britain, and witnessed the beginnings of the strife and confusion which followed that event. Nothing is certainly known of his successors for three centuries after his death till the Angles, about the year 730, placed a bishop at Whitherne. The monastery, however, continued to exist during the sixth century.<sup>2</sup>

The veneration in which the memory of the apostle of the southern Picts was held in subsequent ages appears from the number of dedications made in honour of him. In Scotland

<sup>1</sup> Forbes' edition of Ailred's "Life of Ninian," 292.

<sup>2</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 150; Bede, "Ecc. Hist." v. 23.

there have been reckoned up no fewer than sixty-six churches, altarages, and such like, in which his name has been perpetuated; and they are found throughout twenty-five Scottish counties, extending from Galloway to distant Shetland, besides a few in the northern counties of England.<sup>1</sup> Though numerous miracles were superstitiously believed to have been wrought by him during his life, and after his death by the virtue inherent in his bones, which brought thousands of pilgrims to his shrine, his true fame rests on a surer foundation—his zeal in preaching the Gospel to a heathen people, and the remarkable success with which his labours were crowned.

During a period of more than a century after the death of Ninian there are only a few contemporary references to ecclesiastical affairs in the British Islands. It was probably a considerable time before this event that the promulgation of the doctrines of Pelagius began to trouble the Church in Britain, as elsewhere. This person, who is believed to have been born about the middle of the fourth century, was a monk residing in Rome, but a native of Britain, and probably of Wales. The name Pelagius is said to have been adopted by him as a Greek rendering of his original appellation Morgan, meaning "sea-born." He had a zealous disciple called Celestius, who was a Scot, that is, according to the ancient signification of the term, an Irishman.<sup>2</sup> About the year 405, these men began to publish certain new opinions concerning Original Sin, Grace, Free Will, Election, and Christ's Atonement, thus commencing what is well known as the Pelagian controversy. The doctrines of Pelagius, which had been condemned by a council at Carthage, were introduced into Britain, in the year 429, by Agricola, son of the Pelagian bishop Severianus; and a Gallican council, in response to a deputation from orthodox British bishops asking help to enable them to overcome the heretics, sent over, in the same year, Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, bishop of Troyes, for that purpose. Germanus at the same time received, "at the instance of Palladius the deacon," a similar commission from Pope Celestine.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Forbes' edition of Ailred's "Life of Ninian," 13.

<sup>2</sup> "Hence," says Pinkerton, "St. Jerome, who lived at this time, calls the heresy of Pelagius *Pultis Scotorum*, 'Scottish potage,' and rails at it as peculiarly Scottish, that is, Irish."—*Enquiry*, ii. 260, ed. 1814. <sup>3</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 15-17.

The efforts of these foreigners were for the time completely successful. By their daily preaching of the Word, we are told, not only in the churches, but in the fields, and on the highways and by-ways, the Catholics were everywhere confirmed and the heretics corrected. At length, in a public disputation held at St. Alban's, they confuted and silenced the followers of Pelagius, though the latter displayed their riches and splendid apparel, and had many flatterers. The people confirmed the victory by their acclamations, and could scarcely refrain from doing the heretics bodily harm.<sup>1</sup> The Gallican bishops were then implored by the Britons to assist them in their war against their Saxon and Pictish invaders; and they hastened to fortify their petitioners by their counsel and exhortations. They preached sermons to them daily, and crowds came to be baptized; from which it may be inferred that among the Britons adherence to Christianity was at that time, at least, by no means universal. As a battle was impending, Germanus offered to act as their general, and was accepted. Such a proceeding on the part of an ecclesiastic may seem strange, but Germanus had been a soldier before he became a priest; and, placing himself at the head of the Britons, he now gained a decisive and bloodless victory by a method strictly ecclesiastical and orthodox. Bearing in his hand the military standard, he instructed his troops to repeat all in a loud voice the words which should be given out to them. The priests then three times cried "Hallelujah." This was shouted forth by the whole army; the rocks sent back the echo; and the enemy were so terrified that, throwing away their weapons, they fled in utter confusion.<sup>2</sup> As an old writer quaintly remarks, there was no fight, but a fright, and a flight. This is known as the "Alleluiatic Victory."

The degenerate condition of the British Christians, at a period not long subsequent to this, may be inferred from one of the charges which Gildas brings against them, that they never preached the faith to the heathen Saxons who dwelt amongst them.<sup>3</sup>

Prosper of Aquitaine, who wrote his *Chronicles* shortly after the year 455, and who records Pope Celestine's commission to

Constantius, "*De Vita Germani*," i. 19, 23 (Haddan and Stubbs, "*Concils*," i. 17).

<sup>2</sup> Bede, "*Eccles. Hist.*," i. 17, 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 22.



Germanus, also informs us that two years after that bishop's first visit to Britain, that is, in 431—for he came over a second time to repress Pelagianism—"Palladius, having been ordained by Pope Celestine, was sent to the Scots believing in Christ as their first bishop;"<sup>1</sup> and, further, that thus the same pope, "having ordained a bishop for the Scots, while he endeavoured to keep the Roman island Catholic, also made the barbarous island Christian."<sup>2</sup> This mission of Palladius has given rise to a vast amount of controversy.

The first question to be determined is, Who were the Scots to whom Palladius was sent? Whatever opinion may be held as to the time when the Scots began to cross over from Ireland and settle in Argyllshire—a question which has been already discussed—Prosper's statement clearly proves that it was to the Irish Scots Palladius was sent. By "the barbarous island" he could only mean Ireland, as by "the Roman island" Britain is indicated. Quite different, however, is the opinion expressed by Fordun, who gives the following account of Palladius and his supposed coadjutor, and their disciples:—"In A.D. 430, Pope Celestinus sent St. Palladius into Scotia, as the first bishop therein. It is, therefore, fitting that the Scots should diligently keep his festival and Church commemorations; for by his word and example he, with anxious care, taught their nation—that of the Scots, to wit—the orthodox faith, although they had for a long time previously believed in Christ. Before his arrival the Scots had, as teachers of the faith and administrators of the sacraments, priests only, or monks, following the rite of the primitive church. So he arrived in Scotia with a great company of clergy, in the eleventh year of the reign of King Eugenius; and the king freely gave him a place of abode where he wanted one. Moreover, Palladius had as his fellow-worker in preaching and administering the sacraments a most holy man, Servanus, who was ordained bishop, and created, by Palladius, his coadjutor—one worthy of him in all respects—in order to teach the people the orthodox faith, and with anxious care perfect the work of the Gospel; for

<sup>1</sup> "Ad Scotos in Christum credentes ordinatur a Papa Celestino Palladius, et primus episcopus mittitur."—*Mon. Hist. Brit.* lxxxii.

<sup>2</sup> "Contra Coll." (*Mon. Hist. Brit.* ch.)

Palladius was not equal to discharging alone the pastoral duties over so great a nation. In the *History of St. Kentigern* we read:—This Servanus was the disciple of the reverend bishop Palladius, almost in the very earliest days of the Scottish Church. Palladius himself . . . on his arrival in Scotia, found St. Servanus there, and called him to work in the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth; and when, afterwards, the latter was sufficiently imbued with the teaching of the Church, Palladius appointed him his suffragan over all the nation of the Scots. So runs the story in that work. The holy bishop Ter-ranan, likewise, was a disciple of the blessed Palladius, who was his godfather, and his fostering teacher, and furtherer in all the rudiments of letters and of the faith. Kentigern also was a disciple of St. Servanus, by whom he was washed in the font of holy baptism, and thoroughly indoctrinated in all the dogmas and learning of the Christian religion.”<sup>1</sup>

Following his usual method of interpreting the words Scotia and Scots, whenever they occur, as meaning North Britain and its people, Fordun here appropriates the mission of Palladius to them instead of assigning it to the Scots of Ireland. But he had previously stated that the North-British Scots had been converted to the Christian faith in the year 203. If, then, Palladius was appointed their first bishop in 430, Fordun was placed under the necessity of asserting that during the intervening period their Christian teachers had been priests only, or monks. In representing this state of matters as being in accordance with the custom of the primitive Church, he is correct to this extent, that the distinction between priests, or presbyters, and bishops was at first unknown. But in reference to our country, he was probably thinking of no earlier system of ecclesiastical polity than that of the Church of Columba, whose organization, as will be seen, was monastic; and in which the bishop—when there happened to be one—was subject to the presbyter-abbot. On these statements of Fordun, and on the supposed identity of the Culdees with the Columban monks and other early Scottish clergy, was founded the belief, so long prevalent, that the primitive Church of Scotland was a “Culdee” institution, in which bishops had no place.

<sup>1</sup> Fordun's “Chronicle.” iii. 8, 9 (“Historians of Scotland,” iv. 85, 86).



The origin of the Culdees will be considered hereafter. It is sufficient at present to state, that they were unknown till several centuries after the age of Palladius. It may, or may not, be true that the earliest Christians in Scotland had no bishops. The statement can neither be proved nor disproved, since we do not know at what period the Gospel was first preached in North Britain—whether this event took place before or after the introduction of prelatic Episcopacy into the Church. But it is true of the Scots of Ireland, that the earliest Christians amongst them had no bishops. The traditions of that island assert the existence of isolated Christian believers and congregations in its southern and south-eastern districts, and even in remote Connaught, before the mission of Palladius.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Prosper's statement, that this evangelist was sent to the Scots believing in Christ as their first bishop, demonstrates that there was previously a Church in Ireland which was not episcopally governed, though it may have been in a feeble condition and of small extent, the country being then for the most part pagan. The suggestions which have been made, that "first bishop" may mean "chief bishop," or that Palladius was the first bishop sent by Pope Celestine only (St. Patrick being the second)—both of which suggestions imply, or render possible the existence of bishops previous to Palladius—are due solely to the exigencies of controversy, and do not merit serious consideration. Dr. Todd has shown that the story, which occurs in the works of some ancient Irish writers, of four bishops having been sent from Rome to Ireland before Palladius, is a mere fable.<sup>2</sup> As to the alleged sojourn, in that country, of Ninian, who appears to have been a bishop, nothing is certainly known. And as the time of his residence there, if this ever took place, or of his death, has not been ascertained, it cannot be proved that he preceded Palladius. When, or by whom, the Gospel was first preached to the Irish people we know not. The Christians who existed amongst them before the age of Palladius and Patrick may have been—at least nothing can be proved to the contrary—a survival from a period when the distinction between presbyters and bishops had not yet arisen. The special object of the mission of Palladius was,

<sup>1</sup> See Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 189, 221.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 217.

apparently, to organize the isolated congregations, and to confer upon them the supposed advantages of episcopal government, of which, from whatever cause, they had previously been ignorant.

PALLADIUS is believed to have been a native of Gaul, where a family of that name held a prominent place. He was probably the deacon of Germanus, who may have employed him to procure from the Bishop of Rome his approbation of the mission to Britain, which had been organized by the Gallican bishops. Buchanan<sup>1</sup> and others have asserted that the purpose for which Palladius was sent was to oppose the Pelagian heresy; but for this there is no ancient authority. As to what befel him after his arrival in Ireland, the statements of even the earliest writers are conflicting. The ancient Lives of St. Patrick and Nennius' History are the sources of what has been set forth on the subject. Of the two oldest of these Lives, which are believed to be of a date not later than the year 700, the first contains the following account:—"Palladius was ordained and sent to convert this island, lying under wintry cold, but God hindered him; . . . for neither did those fierce and savage men receive his doctrine readily, nor did he himself wish to spend time in a land not his own, but he returned to him who sent him. On his return hence, however, after his first passage of the sea, having commenced his land journey, he died in the territories of the Britons."<sup>2</sup> Two other Lives of St. Patrick give the same statements, except that for "the territories of the Britons" they substitute "the territories of the Picts."<sup>3</sup> In this alteration, however, there may be no intentional tampering with the original words, as might at first sight be supposed, since Nennius, in relating the mission of Palladius, says that he arrived in "Britannia," and there died in the land of the Picts; which shows that the writer regarded the land of the Picts as part of "Britannia," though the latter name was frequently used in a restricted sense, as denoting only the more southern or Romanized portion of the island.<sup>4</sup> Another ancient account, after stating that Palladius founded several

<sup>1</sup> "Rer. Scot. Hist." lib. v.      <sup>2</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 288.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 288.

<sup>4</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 290. Pinkerton thinks it likely that Palladius died in Galloway, "held by the Picts after 426" ("Enquiry into the Hist. of Scot." 2nd ed. ii. 262).

churches in Ireland, goes on to say :—"Nevertheless, he was not well received by the people, but was forced to go round the coast of Ireland towards the north, until, driven by a great tempest, he reached the extreme part of Modhaidh towards the south, where he founded the church of Fordun, and Pledi is his name there."<sup>1</sup> This version represents his leaving Ireland, not to any intention of returning to Rome because he had failed in the object of his mission, but to the occurrence of a storm, in which there appears to be nothing improbable. Another very ancient version of the story, which seems to be an independent account, mentions his having founded three churches in Ireland, with other minute details, and then adds :—"After a short time, Palladius died in the plain of Girgin (or Magh-Girgen, from which the modern name of the Mearns is derived) in a place which is called Forddun. But others say that he was crowned with martyrdom there."<sup>2</sup> The "Tripartite Life of St. Patrick" says of Palladius, that "on turning back afterwards, sickness seized him in the country of the Cruithne (Picts), and he died of it."<sup>3</sup>

The statements contained in the first of the two oldest Lives of St. Patrick have already been given. The second of these documents—Tirechan's "Annotations" on the life of that saint—which Dr. Todd pronounces to be of equal antiquity with the former, asserts that "Palladius the bishop is first sent, who by another name was called Patricius, who suffered martyrdom among the Scots (of Ireland), as ancient saints relate. Then Patricius the second is sent by the angel of God named Victor, and by Pope Celestine. In whom all Hibernia believed, and who baptized almost the whole of it."<sup>4</sup> If Palladius was put to death by the Irish Scots, he could never have returned to any part of Britain. The statement, however, must be viewed with suspicion, as Dr. Todd justly remarks, because of the writer's desire to adduce the authority of "ancient saints" whom he does not name. It is also opposed to the general tenor of the rest of the accounts which have been quoted. It is given, moreover, as the opinion of some only by a different writer, who,

<sup>1</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 290; Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 295.

<sup>3</sup> Translated in Miss Cusack's "Life of St. Patrick," 378.

<sup>4</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 289.

after asserting that Palladius remained in Ireland but a few days—a strange statement when taken along with another, that he had in that short period founded three churches—goes on to say: “But seeing St. Palladius could not do much good there, wishing to return to Rome, he migrated to the Lord in the region of the Picts. Others, however, say that he was crowned with martyrdom in Hibernia.”<sup>1</sup>

There appears, then, to be no good foundation for the assertion that the career of Palladius came to an end in Ireland. Though the document in which this statement is first made is one of the most ancient, the other, which affirms that he died in the territories of the Britons, appears to be of equal antiquity. We may safely accept the concurrent testimony of so many different writers that this event took place amongst the Picts; for, as we have seen, there is no real inconsistency between this and the statement that he died amongst the Britons. This conclusion is much strengthened by Scottish traditions.

These traditions, which in their written form are much less ancient than those of Ireland—for we cannot compete with that country in the antiquity of our writers—while making no mention of the mission of Palladius to the Irish Scots, state that he laboured, died, and was buried at Fordun. In the Aberdeen Breviary he is said to have died at Langforgund—which the copyist evidently mistook for Fordun—in the Mearns.<sup>2</sup> What were believed to be the bones of Palladius were disinterred at Fordun, and inclosed in a silver shrine by Archbishop Scheves of St. Andrews in the year 1494, but disappeared at the time of the Reformation. The Irish accounts make the saint's life after he had been sent to their country very short, whereas, according to the Scottish tradition, his labours at Fordun extended to a lengthened period. In connection with these and other points in which the several accounts contradict each other, the statement that Palladius was also called Patricius—the latter being probably his baptismal, and the former his family name—is very important. The fact has evidently led to a confusion in the accounts of the two evangelists. There is great probability in Dr. Todd's suggestion, that part of the acts of

<sup>1</sup> Todd's “Life of St. Patrick,” 297.

<sup>2</sup> Brev. Aberd. *Prop. SS. Pars .Estiva, Lect. vi. fol. xxv. b.*



Palladius have been transferred to Patrick, and his life shortened in order to admit of the alleged consecration of the latter as his successor by Pope Celestine, who died in 432—that is, one year after he sent Palladius to the Scots—whereby the life of our saint is represented as having terminated in less than a year after his appointment as bishop of the Scots, and no room is left for his labours amongst the Picts.<sup>1</sup> Though the divergent accounts which have been given of his career are certainly perplexing, there yet appears to be no sufficient reason for rejecting the uniform Scottish tradition, that this early missionary continued amongst the Picts the good work of Ninian; founded the church of Fordun; and was there buried, where a church was afterwards dedicated to him and became the resort of pilgrims; and where Paldy's Fair, held on his "day," the 6th of July, and Paldy's Well, still preserve his memory.

Fordun's statements concerning Servanus, or Serf, will be considered in connection with the life of Kentigern, his alleged disciple.

TERRANANUS, or ST. TERNAN, whom Fordun affirms to have been a disciple of Palladius, is said in the Aberdeen Breviary, which devotes six lections to him, to have been baptized by that saint, having been born of noble parents in the province of Myrnia, or the Mearns. Other statements in the Breviary must, however, be rejected; such as, that he went to Rome, was consecrated a bishop by Pope Gregory—who lived in a different age—and was by him sent back to preach the Gospel to his own countrymen; and also, of course, the story of the bell which was given him by the Pope, and followed him from Rome to Scotland. There may, nevertheless, be a foundation of truth in the following legend:—Convecturus, the chief of the province, at first opposed Ternan, and thus addressed him and a multitude who accompanied him: "Hypocrites, what seek ye in my land?" The saint replied, "We seek your salvation, that you may know God, and serve Him." The chief then said, "Cease to speak these deceitful words." Ternan, thus repulsed, withdrew. A miracle, as usual in such cases, followed, and the result was, that Convecturus was converted and baptized.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Life of St. Patrick," 303.

<sup>2</sup> Brev. Aberd., *Pars hyemalis*, fol. cv.

As Palladius has been confounded with St. Patrick, so Ternan's history has been mixed up with that of Palladius. The Féiliré, or Festology of Angus the Culdee, which belongs to the end of the eighth century, contains under June 12, which was Ternan's day, the following couplet:—

“Torannan, the long-famed voyager,  
Over the broad shipful sea.”

A later annotator adds that this was either Palladius or Mothoren—the Irish name for Torannan or Ternan. His words are:—“‘Torannan the far-famed voyager,’ that is, Palladius, who was sent from the successor of Peter to Erin before Patrick. He was not received in Erin; whereupon he went into Alban; he was buried in Liconium. Or Mothoren, of . . . Druim-cliaibh in Cairbre.”<sup>1</sup> Ternan must have had some connection with Ireland, for several Irish Martyrologies also identify him with this Mothoren of Drumcliffe, and, at the same time, style him Abbot of Benchar. This, however, was neither the Irish nor the Welsh Bangor, as some have supposed, but evidently Banchory-Ternan in Kincardineshire, at the church of which place the Aberdeen Martyrology<sup>2</sup> states that Ternan was buried, and near which a well, besides three or four churches in the district, bore his name. Liconium was probably an older name for Banchory. But that Ternan may have been identical with Palladius is the conjecture of Angus' Annotator alone, and is unsupported by any ancient authority. We may rest in the conclusion that this evangelist was the disciple of Palladius, and that the scene of his labours was his native district of the Mearns, where he was, doubtless, a source of blessing to his generation, as attested by the churches which were dedicated to him.<sup>3</sup> St. Irchard, or Yarchardus, a disciple of St. Ternan, and commemorated on the 20th of August, is said to have been connected with Kincardine o' Neil, and perhaps with five other places called Kincardine.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Liber de Arbuthnott,” or St. Andrews Missal, pp. lxxii.-iv.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in “Liber de Arbuthnott,” p. lxxiv.

<sup>3</sup> Namely, a chapel at Findon in Banchory-Devenick, the parishes of Slains, of Arbuthnott, of Upper-Banchory, or Banchory-Ternan, and perhaps a church or chapel at Brechin (Forbes' “Kalendars of Scottish Saints,” 451).

<sup>4</sup> See Forbes' “Kalendars,” 466.



## CHAPTER IV.

ST. PATRICK, THE APOSTLE OF IRELAND—ST. KENTIGERN  
RESTORES CHRISTIANITY IN CUMBRIA.

St. Patrick a Scotsman—Sketch of his career—Organization of the early Church of Ireland—St. Boethius—Foundation of Abernethy—St. Colman—St. Fillan—St. Monenna—St. Kentigern—His life and work—His meeting with St. Columba.

So perplexing are the fables which are mixed up with the facts of our early ecclesiastical history, that while the work of Palladius amongst the Picts has been attributed to Ternan, and, on the other hand, many events of his life have been transferred to Patrick, even the existence of the latter has been questioned. Such scepticism is unwarranted; nevertheless, Patrick's true history is involved in great obscurity. Though Scotland, his native land, was not the scene of his missionary labours, yet some light is shed on its religious and social condition by such notices as we have of himself and his family; while the method and results of his operations amongst a neighbouring Celtic people claim our attention, as illustrative of ecclesiastical affairs in our own country.

The most authentic sources of information regarding St. Patrick are two Tracts written by himself towards the end of his life. One of these is his "Confession," in which he defends himself against opponents for having undertaken the preaching of the Gospel in Ireland, and appeals to his success as a proof of the divine approbation. The other Tract is his "Epistle against Caroticus," a chief in Cardiganshire, which is supposed to have derived its name from him.<sup>1</sup> From this epistle we learn that Caroticus, though nominally a Christian, being in alliance with Scots and apostate Picts, had made a descent on the Irish coast, and having slaughtered some who were yet in their white garments after baptism, carried off others in order to sell them as slaves. Both of these documents are

<sup>1</sup> Both the Confession and the Epistle against Caroticus are printed, in the original Latin, with an English translation, in Miss M. F. Cusack's "Life of St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland," 1869; and also in the "Trias Thaumaturga," 1879, by the same author. Both of these works contain also "The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick," translated from the original Irish by W. M. Hennessy, Esq.

written in barbarous Latin, such as a provincial Briton might be expected to use. The facts stated in them by himself form the groundwork of the many Lives of St. Patrick afterwards composed, which, however, abound not only in legends contradicting each other, but in miraculous incidents not to be found in his own writings.

PATRICK, as he informs us, was the son of Calpurnius, a deacon,<sup>1</sup> son of Potitus, a presbyter, who lived in the village of Bannavem of Tabernia, in the neighbourhood of which he had a small farm. He does not say where this place was, nor that he was born there; but it is clear from his Confession that Roman Britain was his country, and that of his parents. The conjecture that Bannavem of Tabernia was Boulogne-sur-Mer, anciently called Bononia Tarvannæ, or Tarabannæ, has no support from tradition. Patrick's father, he tells us, was also a "decurio," or provincial magistrate. Other accounts affirm that his mother's name was Conches, or Conchessa, daughter of Ecbatus, a Frank, and that she was a sister or niece of St. Martin of Tours; but for the latter statement there is no good authority. Tradition asserts that he was born at Dunbarton, or in its neighbourhood. An ancient Irish hymn mentions Nemthur as his birthplace, and a commentator on the hymn makes this to mean Alcluaid, or Dunbarton. Kilpatrick, at the termination of the Roman Wall, and near Dunbarton, claims to be the place of his nativity. While Patricius was his Roman or Latin name, his baptismal name, or at least that by which he was first called, is said to have been Succat; and it is a curious coincidence, if nothing more, that there is still an estate called Succoth in the district of Kilpatrick.<sup>2</sup>

While living at his father's farm near Bannavem of Tabernia, Patrick was taken captive when nearly sixteen years of age. "I knew not the true God," he says, "and I was carried into captivity to Ireland with many thousands" (or, by a conjectural reading of the original, "with a vile crowd") "of men, according to our deserts, because we had gone back from God, and had not kept His commandments, and were not obedient

<sup>1</sup> The scholiast on Fiacce's Hymn in praise of St. Patrick calls him "Patrick mac Calpuirn." (See Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 353.)

<sup>2</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 12, 13; Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 353-363.

to our priests, who used to warn us for our salvation." There is an ancient tradition that his father, mother, brother, and five sisters went from the Britons of Alcluaid across the Iccian Sea—that is, the English Channel—southwards on a journey to Armoric Brittany, because they had brethren or relatives there at that time; and that the seven sons of a petty British king, having landed and plundered the people of the country wounded Patrick's father, carried off himself and one of his sisters to Ireland, and sold them there. According to this account, Bannavem of Tabernia, from which he himself states he was carried captive, would have been in Brittany. But it is very unlikely that Patrick's father, while living among the Britons of Alcluaid, had a farm in remote Gaul. Moreover, though he does not expressly say, yet his words convey the impression, that it was from his native place he was carried captive. For these reasons, and as being inconsistent with what has been already stated, the story must be rejected.<sup>1</sup>

During Patrick's captivity in Ireland his employment, he tells us, was that of tending cattle. His biographers represent his master, Milchu, as a savage tyrant and a Druid; but there are no such statements in his Confession. While dwelling in his father's house, he had been neglecting religion. Such appears to be the meaning of his own words, that he then "knew not the true God;" for we can hardly suppose this to have been literally true of the son of a deacon. But in Ireland he experienced a blessed change. "There," he says, "the Lord opened the sense of my unbelief, that, even though late, I should remember my sins, and be converted with my whole heart unto the Lord my God." He took increasing delight in prayer both by night and by day, and did not allow the severest weather to interrupt his devotions.<sup>2</sup>

After Patrick had been six years in slavery, he fled from his master; and, obtaining a passage in a ship which was manned by pagans, crossed the seas, and encountered various adventures and hardships, including a journey of twenty-eight days through a desert, whose situation is unknown. He then escaped from the sailors, with whom he had spent sixty days. A few years

<sup>1</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 360-362; Cusack's "Life," 580.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 362, 374; "Confession" (Cusack's "Life," 581).

after this event—how many he does not say—he was with his parents or relatives in Roman Britain, who received him as a son, and implored him, since he had endured so many trials, not again to leave them. Nevertheless, he resolved to devote himself to the work of preaching the Gospel to the Irish people—whose language he had doubtless acquired during his captivity—being convinced by a vision which he had seen, or believed he had seen, that he was thereunto divinely called. In the dead of night he saw a man coming to him as if from Ireland, bearing innumerable epistles, and the beginning of one of them contained the words, “The voice of the Irish;” and he heard voices crying to him, “We pray thee, holy youth, to come, and henceforth walk amongst us.” In relating this, he gives thanks to God that “after very many years He granted to them the blessing for which they cried.”<sup>1</sup>

When Patrick escaped from captivity, he was twenty-two years of age. How he spent the interval between that event and his return to Ireland he does not tell us, further than that he was with his parents or relatives in Britain when the vision referred to occurred. He alludes to the fact of his having been made a deacon of the Church, but does not mention the date of his ordination. It is probable that he laboured in Ireland first, and for many years, as a presbyter, since it appears from his Confession that he commenced his missionary work there while yet a young man, and that he was forty-five years of age when consecrated a bishop. He does not state where he received episcopal orders. According to one of his biographers, this took place in Gaul. Others say that he received an ecclesiastical education under St. Martin and St. Germanus, and was consecrated bishop of the Irish by Pope Celestine; but these events appear to have been transferred to his life from that of Palladius. He himself says nothing of either of them—a circumstance which, if they had really taken place, would be very strange in view of the purpose of self-defence for which he wrote his Confession. Moreover, he speaks of himself as being “unlearned” and “very rustic,”<sup>2</sup> assertions which, along with his incorrect Latinity, are inconsistent with the supposition that he had

<sup>1</sup> Todd's “Life,” 368–377; “Confession” (Cusack's “Life,” 592).

<sup>2</sup> *Indoctus* and *rusticissimus*.

received a learned education on the Continent, or anywhere else.<sup>1</sup>

As an evangelist, Patrick's labours and journeyings were incessant, and his success was remarkable. He himself states that "many people had by his means been born again to God; that those who had worshipped only idols and abominations had become the people of the Lord; and that the sons of Scots and the daughters of chieftains appeared now as monks and virgins of Christ." His encounters with Druids have been already mentioned. His biographers tell us that he assembled and addressed vast multitudes of people, with their chieftains, who were deeply impressed by his preaching; and that on more than one occasion thousands were baptized by him. He himself says that oftener than once he had baptized large numbers. Much of his success was, under Providence, doubtless due to the judicious method which he adopted. The Irish, like the Scottish Celts, were divided into tribes or clans. Over each the will of its chief was supreme. It was thus a necessity for any missionary amongst them that he should secure the chief's concurrence before he attempted to influence the people. Patrick's first aim, therefore, was to gain over the kings and chieftains, and in this he was often successful. When the chief embraced the new faith, the clan followed the example of one so revered. This is doubtless the explanation of the large numbers whom Patrick is said to have baptized. When a tribe adopted Christianity, he placed among them a bishop and one or two presbyters; and at the same time founded a church, to which the chief, in many cases, made a grant of land as an endowment.<sup>2</sup>

Patrick is said to have consecrated 350 bishops, 300 presbyters, and 700 churches.<sup>3</sup> These figures are evidently artificial, but the proportion of the two orders thus represented as having existed in the ancient Church of Ireland is in accordance with fact. So large a number of bishops in comparison with that of presbyters need not surprise us. It corresponds with what is known to have prevailed elsewhere. The gradual evolution of the ecclesiastical polity of later ages out of primitive Pres-

<sup>1</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 353.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 380, 499.

<sup>3</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," pp. 28, *note*, 508; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 21.



bytery did not advance in different countries uniformly. In some the change was more rapid than in others. The first stage reached was that of congregational Episcopacy. There was a bishop in every congregation, along with several presbyters and deacons. It was this congregational bishop, or parish minister, as he might be called—though neither parishes nor dioceses in the modern sense existed in the early ages—whose office Ignatius, in his Epistles, so constantly upholds. "When the Episcopal system had established itself," says a learned Episcopalian writer,<sup>1</sup> "there was a bishop wherever in later times there would have been a parish church. From the small province of proconsular Asia, which was about the size of Lincolnshire, forty-two bishops were present at an early council; in the only half-converted province of North Africa 470 episcopal towns are known by name." The presidency of the bishop over the presbyters and deacons of more congregations than one was a subsequent stage of development. The system which Patrick established in Ireland represented the former of these stages. It was a tribal or congregational, as opposed to a diocesan episcopacy.

St. Patrick appears to have also founded monasteries, or semi-monastic institutions, in which the monks were probably laymen, and women also were encouraged to devote themselves to pious offices. A peculiar institution of the early Irish Church, which probably owed its origin to Patrick, was that of collegiate charges, in which were placed seven bishops, who were usually all brothers or near relatives. The special purpose for which they were founded is unknown; but it may have had some reference to another curious fact, that there were instances of seven churches erected in close proximity to each other. Collegiate institutions of this kind even became numerous. In the Litany of Angus the Culdee, 141 groups of seven bishops are invoked. These bishops may have been intended to provide an ample supply of instruction for converts and others, and to celebrate Divine service both by day and night. Be this as it may, Patrick appears to have devoted much attention to the training of natives for the ministry. We

<sup>1</sup> Hatch, "The Organization of the Early Christian Churches," 79; see also Lightfoot, "On the Epistle to the Philippians," 227.



are told that he wrote out, and gave to his converts, the "Abgitorium," or alphabet, which we may understand to mean that he gave them education in general. By these and similar means there would, in course of time, be diffused amongst the people a knowledge of the doctrines and duties of their new faith, which at the time of their baptism, must have been very imperfect.<sup>1</sup>

As in similar cases elsewhere, Patrick found it necessary to tolerate many pagan customs, and to convert into Christian festivals certain observances which he was either unable, or judged it imprudent to abolish. Though his success in gaining over the Irish to a profession of Christianity was great, there is no foundation for the common belief, that through his labours the whole people of the island were converted, and that the change of religion was effected without persecution or disturbance. His efforts were often resisted, and his teaching rejected; his life was sometimes in danger, and in certain cases he had to protect his establishments by fortifications; and not till long after his death did Christianity become the national faith of Ireland.<sup>2</sup> Yet few evangelists have been more worthy of being held in grateful remembrance; and, though preceded by others, he may be fitly styled the "apostle of Ireland." He was unquestionably the greatest missionary who ever went forth from Scotland to preach the Gospel to the heathen.

The chronology of Patrick's life has been the subject of much dispute. It is commonly stated that he was born in the year 372, and commenced his missionary work in 432, when sixty years of age; but the latter statement is contradicted by his own writings. Dr. Todd, after an exhaustive examination of facts and dates, arrives at the conclusion that he returned to Ireland about the year 440. In any case his birth must have occurred some considerable time after 372. He died most probably on the 17th of March, 493, at a very advanced age. The place of his death was Saul, where his first church was built. He was buried at Downpatrick, and his relics were kept there till the time of the Reformation.<sup>3</sup>

The Irish people soon began to repay to Scotland the

<sup>1</sup>Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 32, 508. <sup>2</sup>Ibid. chap. iii. <sup>3</sup>Ibid. ehaps. ii. iii. p. 497.

benefits which Patrick had been the agent in conferring upon them. Whatever may have been the nature of Ternan's connection with Ireland, there is evidence of the presence, even before Columba's advent, of other Irish ecclesiastics in districts both north and south of the Forth and Clyde. St. Boethius, or Buitte, who died in the year 521, is said to have come from Ireland to the territories of the Picts, accompanied by the fabulous number of sixty followers, including ten brothers and ten virgins; to have restored to life Nectan, the Pictish king, who had just died; and to have obtained from him a grant of the fort in which the miracle was performed, where he founded a church, and left one of his followers in charge of it. The place was probably Carbuiddo, or "Castrum Boethii," near Dunnichen, which was anciently called Dun Nechtain.<sup>1</sup> The Pictish Chronicle states that the same sovereign, Nectan Morbet, or Nectan the Great, son of Erip or Irb, king of all the provinces of the Picts, in the fifth year of his reign, gave to God and St. Bridget, "till the day of judgment," Abernethy, whose boundaries it minutely describes; and that this was done in presence of Darduglach, abbess of Kildare, who had come over from Ireland two years before, and now sang Hallelujah over that offering. The cause of the grant having been given was, that when Nectan had been expelled to Ireland by his brother Drust, he had asked St. Bridget to pray to God for him; and that she, having done so, assured him that if he would return to his own country, God would put him in possession of the kingdom, which accordingly took place.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately this interesting account of the foundation of Abernethy cannot be reconciled with what is otherwise known of the persons mentioned in it. Nectan reigned from the year 457 to 481; but as St. Bridget's death did not occur till 525, Darduglach, who succeeded her as abbess of Kildare, could not have come in that capacity to Abernethy during Nectan's lifetime. Wynton and Fordun attribute the foundation of Abernethy to King Garnard, who died in 599, having succeeded Brude, whom Columba, as will be seen, converted. But the Chronicle of St. Andrews states that

<sup>1</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 410: Skene, "Celtic Scotland." ii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 6.

Abernethy was founded by another Nectan, son of Uerb or Irb, who is said in some of the lists of the Pictish kings to have succeeded Garnard. The identity of the names of the two sovereigns has probably caused the act of one of them to be assigned to the other. Whatever was the true date of the foundation of Abernethy, there appears to have been a connection between its church and that of Ireland. "It was probably an affiliated cell of Kildare," says Dr. Reeves, "and though a nunnery in the first instance, subsequently was transferred, like Kildare itself, into a collegiate establishment of monks."<sup>1</sup>

St. Bridget was regarded as one of the three chief saints of Ireland, the other two being St. Patrick and St. Columba. There is great probability in the conjecture of Dr. Skene, that it is to her Patrick alludes in his Confession when he says:—"There was one blessed Scotie (that is, Irish) maiden, very fair, of noble birth, and of adult age, whom I baptized; and after a few days she came to me, because, as she declared, she had received a response from a messenger of God desiring her to become a virgin of Christ, and to draw near to God. Thanks be to God, on the sixth day from that, she with praiseworthy eagerness seized on that state of life which all the virgins of God likewise now adopt." Others say that Bridget received the veil from St. Mel, nephew and disciple of Patrick. The true facts of the life of this good woman, who has been called the Mary of Ireland, and is said to have been of surpassing beauty, have been overlaid by the most absurd fables. She founded the nunnery of Kildare, and devoted herself to the education of young girls. Many other nunneries throughout Ireland acknowledged her as their mother and foundress. She was held in great veneration in Scotland, and, under the name of St. Bride, had numerous dedications in Dalriada and the adjacent islands, as well as in other districts.<sup>2</sup>

The name of another Irish saint, Colman or Mocholmoe, of Drumore, where he founded a monastery before the year 514, appears in Inchmocholmoe, or Inchmahome, in the Lake of

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' "History of the Culdees," 171, 250; Wynton's "Chron." ii. 37 ("Historians of Scotland"); Fordun, bk. iv. chap. xii.; "Chron. Picts and Scots," 399.

<sup>2</sup> "Celtic Scotland," ii. 443; Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 381; Butler's "Lives of the Saints." *sub voce* Bridget.

Menteith, which was dedicated to him. Fillan or Faolen, the "Stammerer" or "Leper," also an Irishman, made his abode at Rath Erenn, or "the fort of the Earn," now Dundurn, in the parish of Comrie. The name of St. Fillan's parish is derived from him, and the church of Aberdour also, on the Forth, is dedicated to him. Both Colman and Fillan were disciples of the same teacher, St. Ailbe of Emly.<sup>1</sup> There was also another Fillan, to be afterwards noticed.

South of the Forth, Monenna is the subject of several legends, which doubtless embody some real incidents. She is said to have been a disciple of St. Patrick, to have formed a religious community of women, and founded a church in the county of Armagh. Brignat, one of her virgins, was sent by her to Rosnat, which, as we have seen, was one of the names of Whitherne. Monenna, according to the legends, founded many churches or nunneries in Scotland, mostly at fortified places. Of these, three were in Galloway, and one at each of the following places:—Dundonald, Dunbarton, Stirling, Dunedin or Edinburgh, Dunspeider in East Lothian, and Lanfortin or Longforgan, where she died. Monenna was probably the same person as Moduenna or Medana, to whom Kirkmaiden was dedicated.<sup>2</sup>

To whatever extent Christianity may have permeated the Britons of Strathclyde before the withdrawal of the Romans, or subsequently through the labours of Ninian, there is too abundant proof that many had afterwards fallen away from the faith, and that heathenism had regained much of its former influence. In ST. KENTIGERN, or MUNGO, there now appeared an evangelist by whose devoted exertions the Christian religion was to be restored or established throughout the whole Cymric territories, extending from the Clyde to Wales, as well as in certain districts in the east of Scotland.

We possess no earlier information concerning Kentigern than what is derived from two Lives of him, which were not written till more than five centuries after his death. There exists no document proceeding from himself by which, as in the case of St. Patrick, we can test or correct the assertions

<sup>1</sup> Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," 341; Skene's "Celtic Scotland," ii. 33.

<sup>2</sup> See "Celtic Scotland," ii. 38; Forbes' "Kalendars," 404.



of his biographers. The first of the Lives referred to was composed at the instance of Herbert, bishop of Glasgow, about the middle of the twelfth century, by a foreign churchman who states that he had travelled through many countries, and who calls himself "a cleric of St. Kentigern." This appears to be the Life quoted by Fordun; but only a fragment of it has come down to us, ending immediately after the birth of the saint. The second Life, however, is complete, and was written, somewhat later than the other, by Joceline, a monk of Furness Abbey—author also of legendary Lives of St. Patrick and King David of Scotland—and was dedicated to his namesake, Joceline, bishop of Glasgow. Like Ailred's "Life of Ninian," it professes to be founded on two earlier works, one of which was probably the fragmentary Life already mentioned, and the other was written in the "Scotic dialect," that is, in Irish Gaelic. Both the fragmentary Life and that by Joceline, but especially the latter, are so deeply tinged with the ideas of the twelfth century, that many of their statements must be received with distrust—to say nothing of the miracles with which they abound.<sup>1</sup>

From these biographies we obtain the following account of Kentigern:—His mother, whose name was Thaney,<sup>2</sup> was the daughter of a "certain king Leudonus, a man half-pagan, from whom the province over which he ruled obtained the name of Leudonia (the Lothians) in North Britain." She, having become a Christian, though not yet baptized, "had for a suitor a most graceful young man," Ewen the son of Erwegende, sprung from a most noble stock of the Britons, and said to be the son of a king; but she could not be prevailed on to become his wife. Her father then gave her the choice of either marrying the young man, or of being handed over to the care of a swineherd; and she chose the latter alternative. The swineherd showed all possible respect to her; and, being himself a Christian, taught her what he had learned from

<sup>1</sup> The fragmentary Life was printed by Mr. Cosmo Innes in the "*Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis*," vol. i. The Life by Joceline was printed in Pinkerton's "*Vitæ Antiquæ Sanctorum Scotiæ*." Both of them are now included in "*Historians of Scotland*," vol. v., translated and edited by Bishop Forbes.

<sup>2</sup> The name Thaney, or Tanew, has been corrupted into St. Enoch, after which unknown saint a church in Glasgow and another in Dundee have been called!

Christian teachers, for he had received the Christian doctrine from Servanus, who was the disciple of Palladius. Thaney, having been afterwards betrayed by her suitor, under peculiar circumstances, was, though innocent, condemned by her father to be stoned, according to the laws of her country. But as none of the officers would presume to cast a stone at one of the royal family, they brought her to the top of a hill called Kepduf, or Dulpelder, now Traprain Law, in the parish of Prestonkirk; placed her in a chariot, which they precipitated from the summit; and thus consigned her to a terrible death. But having made the sign of the cross, she reached the foot of the hill unhurt.

Thaney's father now ordered her to be exposed in an open boat on the sea; and, having been brought down to the mouth of a river called Aberlessic (Aberlady Bay), she was placed in a coracle or curach—that is, a boat covered with hides—and taken out into deep water, beyond the Isle of May. Next morning she was cast ashore in safety by the tide, at a place called Culenros (Culross). Having landed, she saw near the beach the ashes of a fire left there by some other persons. From the live embers she kindled a fire for herself, and was then delivered of a son. Some herds, having found her, took pity upon her, and gave her food. They also reported their discovery to Servanus, who then dwelt in that place, teaching sacred literature to many boys, who were to be trained to the divine service. He replied, "Oh! would that it were so."<sup>1</sup> When mother and child were brought to him, he exclaimed "Mochöhe! mochohe!" (that is, "My dear! my dear!") and took charge of them and taught them. After certain days he baptized both of them, calling the mother "Taneu" (says Joceline, who had not previously given her a name, as the author of the fragmentary Life had done), and bestowing on the boy the name of "Kyentyern," which in Welsh signifies "The Capital Lord."<sup>2</sup> Under the instruction which he received from Servanus, Kentigern made rapid progress in learning. He possessed a docile heart, a ready intelligence, a tenacious memory, a persuasive

<sup>1</sup> In the original the words are, "*A Dia cur fir sin.*"

<sup>2</sup> The Gaelic form of the name is *Ceanntighern*, from *Ceann*, a head, and *Tighearn*, lord ("Historians of Scot." v. 326).



tongue, and a sweet and harmonious voice for singing the divine praises. The old man loved him more than all his companions, and was accustomed to call him "Munghu," that is, in Welsh, "dearest friend."<sup>1</sup>

Joceline tells a pretty story of Servanus and his favourite pupil, ending, of course, with a miracle. A little bird—the red-breast (*rubisca*)—received its daily food from the hand of the saint, and thus became tame and domesticated. "Sometimes it even perched upon his head, or face, or shoulder, or bosom; sometimes it was with him when he read or prayed; and by the flapping of its wings, or by the sound of its inarticulate voice, or by some little gesture, it showed the love it had for him." One day when the saint was praying in his oratory, the boys began to make sport with the little bird; and while they sought to snatch it from each other, it was destroyed in their hands, and the head torn from the body. They then laid the blame on Kentigern, though he had no hand in the affair. Servanus took very ill the death of the bird, and threatened severe punishment on its destroyer. Whereupon Kentigern restored it to life, and straightway it flew forth to meet the old man as he returned from the church.<sup>2</sup>

On account of the jealousy of these youths, Kentigern at length resolved to withdraw from Servanus; and, having secretly taken his departure, he arrived at the Frisian shore, where the river—the Forth—could not be crossed, because the tide overflowed its banks. The difficulty was removed by a miraculous dividing of the waters; and, having crossed over, near the junction of what are now the rivers Forth and Teith, he beheld, on the bank which he had just quitted, Servanus, who had followed him in pursuit, and now entreated him to return. But Kentigern replied, that it was God's will that he should depart. Thus, after blessing each other, they were divided, and never again saw each other. Kentigern then went to Kernach (Carnock, in the parish of St. Ninian's), and, entering a house there, found in it a pious old man named Fregus (Fergus), who had been long sick. He died that night, and next day Kentigern yoked two untamed bulls to a new wain, and, having placed

<sup>1</sup> Joceline's "Life of Kentigern," chaps. i.-iv.; Fragmentary Life, chaps. i.-viii.

<sup>2</sup> Joceline, chap. v.

the dead body thereon, ordered the beasts to carry the burden to the place which the Lord had provided for it.<sup>1</sup> And so the bulls came by a straight course as far as Cathures, which is now called Glasgu, and halted near a cemetery which had long before been consecrated by St. Ninian, but in which no one had yet been buried. Here Kentigern interred the corpse of Fregus; "and that tomb," says Joceline, "is to the present time encircled by a delicious density of overshadowing trees"—doubtless the remains of the original forest in which Ninian had cleared a site for a church and cemetery.<sup>2</sup>

Kentigern lived in this place with two brothers, one of whom treated him kindly, and prospered; but the other was hostile to him, and, of course, speedily lost his life. After some time "the king and clergy of the Cambrian region, with other Christians, albeit they were few in number, came together, and after taking into consideration what was to be done to restore the good estate of the Church, which was well-nigh destroyed, they with one consent approached St. Kentigern, and elected him, in spite of his many remonstrances and strong resistance, to be the shepherd and bishop of their souls. . . . And having called one bishop from Ireland, after the manner of the Britons and Scots of that period, they caused him to be consecrated bishop."<sup>3</sup>

What amount of truth there may be in the strange occurrences thus said to have preceded and followed the birth of Kentigern it is impossible to say. Old Welsh documents give to his father and mother names which are virtually identical with those contained in the fragmentary *Life*, and to that extent the story is confirmed. It is a curious circumstance that on Dunselder Law, from which Thaney is said to have been precipitated, Monenna, as we have seen, is alleged to have founded a church, or female community. The daughter of the king of the district may have been, as Dr. Skene suggests, one of her virgins who proved unfaithful to her monastic vow, and on that account may have been condemned to expulsion and exposure in a curach.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, at the

<sup>1</sup> A similar fable is related in connection with the fixing of the place of St. Patrick's interment—an imitation of 1 Sam. vi. 7, &c. (See Todd's "*Life of St. Patrick*," 491).

<sup>2</sup> Joceline, chaps. viii–x.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* chap. xi.    <sup>4</sup> "*Celtic Scotland*," ii. 186.

east end of Culross, on the sea-shore, there was anciently a chapel dedicated to St. Mungo, thus bearing out the tradition that his mother landed there.<sup>1</sup> But an insuperable difficulty attends the statements that Servanus was the disciple of Palladius, and also the teacher of Kentigern. We shall afterwards find that these assertions, if true, would necessitate the extension of Kentigern's life to an incredible length. On the other hand, in the "Life of Servanus" which has come down to us, neither the name of Palladius nor that of Kentigern occurs at all, and from the same document it appears that Servanus really lived during the century after Kentigern's death. Some, following the Aberdeen Breviary, think that there were two persons bearing the name of Servanus, or Serf—an earlier and a later—and that their acts were mixed up together in the legends. But the Breviary's assertions that both of them founded Culross, and also died on the 1st of July, cannot be true. It seems not improbable, however, that some other early ecclesiastic may have received Kentigern, and educated him for the Christian ministry; and that the biographers of the saint, in order to glorify their hero, and being ignorant of the true chronology of the period, afterwards asserted that this instructor was Servanus. "The later sanctologists," says a learned writer in reference to this anachronism, "had a rage for bringing all their great saints together."<sup>2</sup>

Kentigern, having established himself in "Glesgu," or, according to another reading, "Desgu, which is, interpreted, The Dear Family, and is now called Glasgow," gathered around him a company of disciples, who appear to have formed a collegiate or semi-monastic brotherhood. They were occupied, like himself, in daily manual labour, chiefly connected with agriculture, besides fastings and vigils, and devotional services. They possessed no private property. They dwelt in single cottages. "Therefore," says Joceline, "these 'single clerics' were called in the common language Calleddei," or Culdees, of whom hereafter. Kentigern's "diocese" extended to the limits of the Cambrian kingdom. Its inhabitants, in consequence of

<sup>1</sup> "Old Statistical Account of Culross," x. 146.

<sup>2</sup> M'Pherson, editor of "Wynton's Chronicle;" see "Historians of Scotland," ix. 226.

their territory being invaded by the heathen Angles, had to some extent lapsed into paganism. Many were not baptized; others were Christians only in name, and their pastors were unskilled and ignorant of the Scriptures. The southern Picts also, who had received the faith from Ninian, had fallen away from it. Kentigern now applied himself zealously to remedy these evils. He was diligent in preaching and baptizing; in instructing the ignorant and reclaiming the vicious; in overthrowing "the shrines of demons," and casting down their images; in building churches and ordaining clergy; in dissolving incestuous and unlawful marriages, and changing concubinage into lawful matrimony; and in introducing ecclesiastical rites.<sup>1</sup>

Joceline describes in great detail the personal habits of Kentigern, from the period of his acceptance of the episcopal dignity, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, when he began to practise increased austerity, onwards till his death. During Lent he retired to desert places, often dwelling in caves, and spending his time in religious meditation and prayer. He journeyed not on horseback but on foot, even to extreme old age. As to his dress, he wore haircloth next his skin; above this a garment of goatskin, a cowl, a white alb; and a stole over his shoulders. He bore a pastoral staff, not gilded and gemmed, but of simple wood, and merely bent. He had in his hand his Manual book, being always ready to exercise his ministry. With respect to his food, he was extremely abstemious, living chiefly on bread, milk, and cheese, and abstaining from flesh and wine. If, when journeying, or dining with the king, he relaxed somewhat of his self-denial, he punished himself on his return home by practising increased severity. His bed was a stone "hollowed like a monument," or stone coffin, and he had, like Jacob, another stone for his pillow. He allowed himself but a short time for sleep, and celebrated the night-watches with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. At the second cock-crowing he stripped himself of his clothes, plunged into the cold and running water of the Molendinar Burn, and there, with his eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, chanted the whole Psalter. He then sat down to dry his

<sup>1</sup> M'Pherson, editor of "Wynton's Chronicle," chaps. xi. xix.



limbs on the brow of a hill called Gulath,<sup>1</sup> by the water-side, near his own home. This custom of bathing neither lightning, hail, snow, nor storms ever interrupted, unless a journey or sickness prevented it. In speech he exercised self-control, and "preached more by silence than many doctors and rulers do by loud speaking." He was munificent in alms-deeds and works of mercy, and all he possessed became the common treasury of the poor. In his person he was of middle stature, and of such strength as to be capable of enduring great fatigue, both of body and mind. By the grace of his form, and the beauty of his countenance, he won the hearts of all who beheld him; and his outward cheerfulness reflected the inward peace which possessed his soul.<sup>2</sup>

A considerable time having elapsed after the commencement of Kentigern's work at Glasgow, "a certain tyrant," says Joceline, "by name Morken, who had ascended the throne of the Cambrian kingdom, scorned and despised the life and doctrine of the man of God, in secret slandering, in public resisting him from time to time, putting down his miraculous power to magical illusion, and esteeming as nothing all that he did." Once upon a time Kentigern, being in want of supplies to feed the brethren of his monastery, humbly asked this Morken to help them. To his request the king sarcastically answered, "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee, as thou hast often taught others that they who fear God shall lack nothing. Thou, who fearest God, art in want of everything; while to me, who neither seek the kingdom of God nor the righteousness thereof, all prosperous things are added. Thy faith, therefore, is vain; thy preaching false." Kentigern, in reply, argued that the possession of wealth was not necessarily a blessing though good men were often in want and the wicked had abundance; and that the rich needed the support of the poor, by whose labours they themselves were sustained. Morken then scornfully told him that if, through his trust in God, and without human hands, he could transfer to his own dwelling the corn in the royal barns, he would

<sup>1</sup> This word is said to signify "dew," and the hill was afterwards known as the Dow Hill, and was situated on the eastern bank of the Molendinar Burn ("Historians of Scot." v. 344).

<sup>2</sup> Joceline, chaps. xi.-xviii.

thenceforward obey his requests. And this, of course, actually occurred. The Clyde overflowed its banks, and swept the king's barns, with their whole contents, to the saint's residence "at a place called Mellingdenor"—that is, beside the Molen-dinar, or Mill Burn—and not a sheaf or blade was wetted.<sup>1</sup> Morken, enraged by the loss he had thus sustained, and calling Kentigern magician and sorcerer, now threatened that if ever again he appeared in his presence, he should suffer severely, as one that had "made game" of him. When the saint afterwards meekly approached him, he rushed upon him, kicked him, and threw him to the ground on his back. To the perpetration of this outrage Morken was instigated by a wicked counsellor named Cathen, who now laughed loudly, and, mounting his horse, rode away in triumph. His triumph was short-lived. His horse stumbled and fell; its rider broke his neck, and expired before the gate of the king his master, who himself was immediately attacked by gout, and died in the royal town, which from him was termed Thorpmorken—but which cannot now be identified—and the gout became hereditary in his family. "After this," says Joceline, "for many days Kentigern enjoyed great peace and quiet, living in his own city of Glasgu, and going through his diocese." Interference with the saint had been found to be dangerous.<sup>2</sup>

When some time had passed, Kentigern, having learned that certain of Morken's kindred had conspired to put him to death, resolved for the time to quit the place, and accordingly journeyed to Menevia in South Wales, where St. Dewi, or David, was then bishop, after whom the place is now called St. David's. There he would find a people of the same Cymric race and language as the Britons of Strathclyde. While travelling to Wales, he had reached Karlecolum, or Carlisle, and heard that many among the mountains were given to idolatry, or ignorant of the Gospel. He therefore turned aside, and by his preaching was instrumental in converting the pagans, and in delivering others from their erroneous doctrines.<sup>3</sup> After remaining some time in a certain "thickly planted place," and instructing the people, he erected a cross as a sign of the faith,

<sup>1</sup> Joceline. chap. xxi.      <sup>2</sup> Ibid., chap. xxii.

<sup>3</sup> Eight churches in Cumberland dedicated to Kentigern prove his influence there (Forbes in "Historians of Scotland," v. 83., quoting Hutcheson's "History of Cumberland")



whence the place took the name, in English, of Crossfield. Then directing his steps by the sea-shore, and in every place sowing the seed of the Word, he "at length, safe and sound, reached St. Dewi, and found in him greater works than had been reported by fame."<sup>1</sup>

As monachism had been introduced by Ninian into Galloway from Tours, so from the same quarter, but more immediately from Brittany, the system passed over into Wales; and its chief promoters there were St. David, St. Gildas the historian, and St. Cadoc. Kentigern also, who had already founded a monastery at Glasgow, now informed Cathwallain, the king, of his desire to establish another in that country. The king gave him permission to choose for such a purpose any place in his dominions. The site selected by Kentigern was in North Wales. When, along with a crowd of his disciples, he was exploring the country in order to discover the place most suitable for a monastery, a white boar met them, and by nodding, grunting, and tearing up with its long tusk the soil where it halted, indicated the proper situation.<sup>2</sup> This was on the bank of the river Elgu, or Elwy, near its junction with the Clwyd. The monastery was called Llanelwy, afterwards St. Asaph's. If the river Clwyd was already so named, the identity of the name with that of the Clyde which Kentigern had left in the north may have led him to make his home on its banks. If, on the other hand, it received this name from him, the truth of the story of his life, as told by Joceline, is thereby so far confirmed.<sup>3</sup>

The erection of the monastery is thus described:—"Some cleared and levelled the situation; others began to lay the foundation in the ground thus levelled; some cutting down trees, others carrying them, and others fitting them together, commenced, as the father had measured and marked out for them, to build a church and its offices of polished wood, after the fashion of the Britons, seeing that they could not yet build of stone, nor were so wont to do." While the work was pro-

<sup>1</sup> Joceline, chap. xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> When St. Ciaran, an Irish saint, was about to erect a monastery, and had gone into a wood to find materials for it, a wild boar, according to the legend, bit off with his teeth the rods and branches required! See Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Joceline, chaps. xxiii. xxiv.

ceeding, an Angle and heathen, named Melcoinde, came with his soldiers, and ordered the structure to be demolished, and Kentigern and his disciples to be expelled. But he was ultimately converted, and then gladly gave all the help required. When the monastery was completed, old and young, rich and poor, flocked to it. "Nobles, and men of the middle class, brought their children to be trained unto the Lord." The number of those who adopted the monastic rule at length amounted to nine hundred and sixty-five. Of these Kentigern "appointed three hundred, who were unlettered, to the duty of agriculture, the care of the cattle, and the other necessary duties outside the monastery. He assigned another three hundred to duties within the cloister of the monastery, such as doing the ordinary work, and preparing food, and building workshops. The remaining three hundred and sixty-five, who were lettered, he appointed to the celebration of divine service in church by day and night." The numbers are legendary; yet there is ample proof that some of those early monasteries contained a vast number of monks; and Joceline's account probably well illustrates the manner in which those buildings were then constructed, and the several classes of their inmates.<sup>1</sup>

Kentigern, according to his biographer, went seven times from Wales to Rome; but this statement cannot be accepted as history. After he had resided for many years at Llanelwy, and his enemy Morken having died, a revolution took place in the north, which led to his leaving Wales. In the year 573 was fought the battle of Ardderyd, or Arthuret, a place situated eight miles north from Carlisle, in which the pagan party, under Gwendolew, were completely defeated by their Christian opponents, headed by Rederech or Rhydderch, who thus became king of the Cambrian Britons, and reigned at Alcluaid, or Dunbarton; his kingdom being termed Strathclyde, and including all the Cymric territories from the Firth of Forth to the Derwent. "The Lord raised up," says Joceline, "over the Cambrian kingdom a king, Rederech by name, who, having been baptized in Ireland in the most Christian manner by the disciples of St. Patrick, sought the Lord with all his heart, and strove to restore Christianity." Rederech's mother is said to

<sup>1</sup> Joceline, chaps. xxiv. xxv.

have been an Irishwoman, which may account for his having been baptized in Ireland. He was surnamed Hael, or the Bountiful. "Rederech," continues Joceline, "seeing that the Christian religion was almost entirely destroyed in his kingdom, set himself zealously to restore it. And after long considering the matter in his own mind, and taking advice with other Christians who were in his confidence, he discovered no more healthful plan by which he could bring it to a successful result than to send messengers to St. Kentigern to recall him to his first sec." This must have taken place at, or soon after, the year 573, in which the great battle was fought, and the event gives us one authentic date in Kentigern's life. He resolved to comply with the Christian king's request; and, having appointed Asaph his successor in the government of the monastery, and in his episcopal office, he took leave of them all, and went forth by the north door of the church. After he had gone out, that door was closed as a mark of their grief. Hence a custom grew up in that church that that door should never be opened save once a year on the day of St. Asaph, because that, when he succeeded Kentigern, their mourning was turned into joy. In his journey to the north Kentigern was accompanied, if we are to believe Joceline, by 655 of the monks, while only 300 remained with St. Asaph. That some of them went with their old master is not improbable.<sup>1</sup>

While on his way towards Strathclyde, Kentigern was met by King Rederech and his people at Holdelm, now Hoddam, in Dumfriesshire. Here he exhorted the crowd who gathered round him to believe in the living God, and showed them the falsehood of both Celtic and Teutonic paganism, a mixture of which systems appears to have formed the religion of his hearers. He remained at Hoddam for some considerable time, building churches and ordaining clergy. During this period he also, according to Joceline, extended his labours to Galloway and the adjacent parts, restoring Christian faith and sound doctrine. Afterwards he went to "Albania," that is, the north-eastern Lowlands, reclaiming the inhabitants from paganism, erecting churches and monasteries, and placing his disciples over them. These statements are to a certain extent confirmed

<sup>1</sup> Joceline, chaps. xxvii. xxix.-xxxi.

by Welsh dedications in the Deeside district of Aberdeenshire.<sup>1</sup> We must, however, reject Joceline's assertion that Kentigern sent some of his disciples to Orkney, Norway, and Iceland, as inconsistent with the better attested fact that it was from Ireland, in the ninth century, that the first Christian missionaries went to the northern islands. "All this," says Joceline, "being duly done, he returned to his own church of Glasgu."<sup>2</sup>

One of the many miracles ascribed to Kentigern was his restoration of the queen's ring. Languoreth, wife of the good King Rederech, was unfaithful to him, and gave away to a soldier, who was her lover, a gold ring which her husband had presented to her. This having been reported to him, he went out one day hunting, and took the soldier along with him. On the banks of the Clyde they lay down to sleep for a little, but the king, remaining awake, gently drew off the ring from the soldier's finger, and threw it into the river. Returning home, he ordered the queen to produce the ring, and she, going away as if to fetch it, sent a messenger to her lover requiring him to restore it. As it could not be found, the queen was now cast into a dungeon, and threatened with death. In her sad plight she asked Kentigern to intercede for her. The saint ordered her messenger to cast a hook into the Clyde. He did so, and caught "a large fish which is commonly called a salmon," and this, on being cut open, was found to contain the missing ring. It was at once sent to the queen by Kentigern. She was now able to produce it to her husband, and a reconciliation took place. She then confessed her guilt to the saint, and corrected her life for the future, but never revealed the miracle till her husband's death. The salmon and the ring appear in the arms of the city of Glasgow, along with St. Serf's tame redbreast which Kentigern restored to life, a hazel-tree, whose frozen branches he kindled into a flame to light the lamps of the church at Culross, and the bell which he is said to have brought from Rome.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These are Glengairden, dedicated to St. Mungo or Kentigern; Migvie and Llanffinan (now Lumphanan), to Finan; and Midmar, to Nidan. Two adjacent parishes in the island of Anglesea were also called Llanffinan and Llannidan ("Celtic Scotland," ii. 193). Others make Finan to have been an Irishman. See Forbes' "Kalendars," *sub voce*.

<sup>2</sup> Joceline, chaps. xxxii.—xxxiv.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., chap. xxxvi.



An incident of greater significance than that of the salmon and the ring, and one which may be accepted as real, was the visit of Columba to Kentigern. Adamnan, the biographer of Columba, informs us that King Rodere (Rederech) sent a messenger to that saint, to ascertain from him whether he would be killed by his enemies or not; and that he received for answer the assurance, that he would die at home on his own pillow, which took place accordingly.<sup>1</sup> As Columba thus appears to have been on friendly terms with the Strathclyde king, there is nothing unlikely in his visiting Kentigern, which he may have done while on one of his missionary journeys. Of their meeting Joceline gives the following picturesque, though, probably, fanciful description:—"St. Columba, the abbot, whom the Angles call Columkillus, a man wonderful for doctrine and virtues, celebrated for his presage of future events, full of the spirit of prophecy, and living in that glorious monastery which he had erected in the island of Yi, desired earnestly, not once and away, but continually, to rejoice in the light of St. Kentigern. For, hearing for a long time of the fame in which he was estimated, he desired to approach him, to visit him, to behold him, to come into his close intimacy, and to consult the sanctuary of his holy breast regarding the things which lay near his own heart. And when the proper time came, the holy father St. Columba went forth; and a great company of his disciples, and of others, who desired to behold and look upon the face of so great a man, accompanied him. When he approached the place called Mellindenor, where the saint abode at that time, he divided all his people into three bands, and sent forth a messenger to announce to the holy prelate his own arrival, and that of those who accompanied him. The holy pontiff was glad when they said unto him those things concerning them, and, calling together his clergy and people similarly in three bands, he went forth with spiritual songs to meet them. In the forefront of the procession were placed the juniors in order of time; in the second, those more advanced in years; in the third, with himself, walked the aged in length of days, white and hoary, venerable in countenance, gesture, and bearing, yea, even in gray hairs. And all sang 'In the ways of the Lord how great

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan's "Life of St. Columba," bk. i., chap. viii.



is the glory of the Lord,' and again they answered, 'The way of the just is made straight, and the path of the saints prepared.' On St. Columba's side they sang with tuneful voices, 'The saints shall go from strength to strength, until the God of gods appeareth, every one in Zion,' with the Alleluia. . . . When these two godly men met, they mutually embraced and kissed each other; and having first satiated themselves with the spiritual banquet of divine words, they after that refreshed themselves with bodily food."<sup>1</sup>

An unfortunate incident now occurred, which must have somewhat marred the pleasure of the meeting. Some of those who accompanied Columba stole Kentigern's fattest wether, though the saint would have given them a ram if they had but asked it. A miracle followed. The thieves then implored Kentigern to pardon them, which he did, and generously ordered the carcase to be given to them.<sup>2</sup>

The two saints "interchanged their pastoral staves, in pledge and testimony of their mutual love in Christ. But the staff which St. Columba gave to the holy bishop Kentigern was preserved for a long time in the church of St. Wilfrid, bishop and confessor at Ripon. . . . Wherefore, during several days, these saints passing the time together, mutually conversed on the things of God, and what concerned the salvation of souls; then saying farewell, with mutual love, they returned to their homes, never to meet again." A more suggestive incident surely never occurred in the history of the Scottish Church than the conjunction of these illustrious heralds of the Cross beside the cemetery consecrated by Ninian, their distinguished predecessor.<sup>3</sup>

Kentigern had a custom of erecting crosses in places where he had preached and made converts, or had dwelt for some time. One was placed in the cemetery of the Church of the Holy Trinity at Glasgow, and another at Lothwerd, commonly supposed to be the modern Borthwick in Midlothian.<sup>4</sup> To these crosses madmen, and others afflicted with divers diseases, were bound in the evening, and in the morning were found to be cured. Sir David Lindsay<sup>5</sup> thus refers to this custom:—

"Thay bryng mad men on fuit and horsse,  
And bindis thame at Sanct Mongose crosse."

<sup>1</sup> Joceline, chap. xxxix. <sup>2</sup> Chap. xl. <sup>3</sup> Ibid. <sup>4</sup> Chap. xli. <sup>5</sup> Laing's Edition, i. 314.

When Kentigern had attained to extreme old age he became very feeble, and “perceived by many cracks in his earthly house that its ruin was imminent.” At length, feeling that his end was very near, he received the sacrament of the Lord’s body and blood; and after giving affectionate injunctions and warnings to his disciples, and solemnly blessing them, he bade them farewell, and gathered himself up into his stone bed. But some of them prayed him to obtain that he should not enter into heaven without them. The wonderful story of what is alleged by Joceline to have occurred is as follows:—“When the octave of the Lord’s Epiphany, on which the gentle bishop himself had been wont every year to wash a multitude of people in sacred baptism, was dawning—a day very acceptable to St. Kentigern, and to the spirits of the sons of his adoption—the holy man, borne by their hands, entered a vessel filled with hot water, which he had first blessed with the sign of salvation; and a circle of the brethren, standing round him, awaited the issue of the event. And when the saint had been some little time in it, after lifting his hands and his eyes, and bowing his head as if sinking into a calm sleep, he yielded up his spirit. . . . The disciples, seeing what was taking place, lifted the holy body out of the bath, and eagerly strove with each other to enter the water; and so, one by one, before the water cooled, they slept in the Lord in great peace, and having tasted death along with their holy bishop, they entered with him into the mansions of heaven. . . . The brethren stript the saint of his ordinary clothes, which they partly reserved and partly distributed as precious relics, and clothed him in the consecrated garments which became so great a bishop.” They then carried him into the choir with chants and psalms, and buried him beneath a stone on the right side of the altar. The remains of the brethren were interred in the cemetery, in the order in which they had followed Kentigern out of this life, “and all the great men of that region for a long time have been in the custom of being buried there.”<sup>1</sup>

The death of Kentigern has been assigned to various dates. The “Annals of Cambria” place it in the year 612. From Joceline’s narrative it appears that it took place on the 13th

<sup>1</sup> Joceline. chaps. xlii.—xliv.

of January, and on a Sunday. These two days coincided in the year 603, and again in 614. The former year is the more probable. Joceline says that Kentigern lived 185 years. This great age considerably exceeds the 152 years to which the life of Thomas Parr is said, on good evidence, to have extended, and cannot be regarded as historical. As Kentigern was said to have been the disciple of Servanus, and Servanus to have been the coadjutor of Palladius, it was necessary to represent Kentigern's life as abnormally long, in order to cover the period intervening between Palladius' death and his. But Servanus, as has been already stated, lived not before, nor during, but long after Kentigern's time. The name of the saint of Culross may therefore be eliminated from the reckoning, and with its removal is taken away the necessity of attributing to Kentigern a lifetime of 185 years. If from this number we cut off 100, the remainder will leave a reasonable time for the events of his life. His birth would thus take place in the year 518, and his consecration as bishop at Glasgow (when he was twenty-five years of age) in 543. As he was recalled from Wales in 573, or soon after, the period of his second sojourn in Glasgow would extend to thirty years, on the assumption that he died in 603.<sup>1</sup>

Though Kentigern's fame has been to some extent obscured by that of his greater contemporary Columba, yet it is evident that he exercised a powerful and beneficent influence on all who came in contact with him, and that he was eminently successful both in restoring and extending the Christian Church, not only in Strathclyde, but throughout Cumberland and Wales. The affection which he inspired may be inferred from the circumstance that he is best—indeed almost exclusively—known by his pet name of Mungo. He had fourteen dedications in Scotland, besides eight in Cumberland. Before the Reformation, his day was kept as a special festival, with nine lections. His little church, standing close to the cemetery which had been consecrated by St. Ninian, and on the banks of the Molendinar Burn, constructed doubtless of timber and wattles, according to the custom of the time, and surrounded by its group of cottages, was the beginning of the great city

<sup>1</sup> See Forbes' Introduction to "Lives of St. Kentigern," p. lxxxii.

of Glasgow. At a period long subsequent, there arose on the same spot a noble cathedral; and when this was burnt down, another succeeded it, which still survives. But more interesting even than its stately architecture is the circumstance that the crypt incloses the well and tomb of St. Mungo. Since the time when he lived and died there, the surrounding district, as well as the whole country, has made a wonderful advance in Christian civilization; but it should never be forgotten that the foundation of this was laid by his self-denying labours, and those of others of like faith and zeal.

Nothing is known of Kentigern's successors for five centuries after his death. In the year 1116 David, Prince of Cumbria, afterwards King of Scotland, made an inquisition of the seniors and wiser men of Cumbria regarding the see and its endowments, and ascertained that Kentigern was known to have had many successors, that the see had been for some time vacant and plundered, and that considerable estates had been anciently possessed by it. David then caused these to be restored, and John, his tutor, to be consecrated bishop of Glasgow.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Inquisitio* is printed in Pinkerton's "Enquiry," vol. i., Appendix; and in "Reg. Episcop. Glasg." See also Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 151.



## CHAPTER V.

SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE DALRIADIC SCOTS AND  
THE NORTHERN PICTS.

The bishops and monasteries of the early Irish Church—Lawlessness of pagan times—The saints of the Monastic Order—St. Columbanus—St. Columba—Iona and its monastery—The presbyter-bishop question—Conversion of the Pietish king Brude—The Book of Deer—St. Drostan—Island and monastery of Hinba—Other monasteries of the Western Islands and Highlands—Death of St. Columba.

HAVING traced the introduction of the Christian faith among the Southern Picts by Ninian and others, and its restoration and extension throughout the British or Cymric kingdom of Strathclyde by Ninian and Kentigern, we have now to describe its beginning and progress amongst the other branches of the Celtic race—the Scots of Dalriada and the northern Picts.

The Gospel was first preached to the Scots of the Irish Dalriada, a district in the north-east of Ulster, by St. Patrick. When he appeared amongst them, he was welcomed by the twelve sons of Erc, who ruled over them; and he prophesied—so runs the legend—of Fergus Mor, who was one of them, that though his land was then small, compared with that of his brothers, it was he who should be king, and that from him the sovereigns of that territory and of Fortrenn<sup>1</sup> should ever be descended. We are further told that Patrick founded many churches and other “erections”—which were no doubt monasteries—in Dalriada.<sup>2</sup> The emigration of a portion of these Scots to Argyll has been already mentioned. If this event did not take place, as some maintain, till about the end of the fifth century, when Fergus Mor is stated to have held part of Britain—that is, Argyll—and to have died there, the emigrants or invaders, when they arrived, would be already Christians. But it is more probable, as we have seen, that they had crossed over from Ireland long before the period referred to. In that case they must have received the Gospel through their intercourse with their Irish kindred after Patrick’s time. But in whatever way this was brought about, there is no doubt that they were nominally Christians before the arrival of Columba

<sup>1</sup> This word denoted the district between the Forth and the Tay, and in a wider sense Pietland in general.

<sup>2</sup> “Chron. Picts and Scots,” 17.



amongst them. The influence of Irish ecclesiastics in the Western Highlands at this early period is evident from the numerous dedications there to St. Bridget or Bride, as well as from other circumstances of a similar kind.

The remaining branch of the Celtic race—the Picts inhabiting the territory situated north of the Grampians—were still pagans, and it was through Columba's missionary labours amongst them that they were brought over to the Christian faith. Twenty years after the probable date of Kentigern's consecration at Glasgow, and while he was an exile in Wales, Columba landed in Iona. Coming from Ireland, the Church which he founded in Scotland was essentially a branch of the Irish Church, and possessed its peculiar characteristics. A knowledge of these, some of which have been already referred to, is necessary to understand the system he pursued and the institutions he founded in the country of his adoption.

The office and the position of bishops in the Irish Church of that period were marked by several peculiarities. Their number at an earlier period, as we have seen, was very great. They had no fixed dioceses, except in so far as the tribe in which one of them might be placed was an approximation to a diocese. Episcopal orders were often conferred on persons of great learning or sanctity as a kind of honorary degree, and the office was sometimes united with that of scribe, or even with the profession of anchorite. Bishops were in some instances consecrated *per saltum*, without having previously passed through the inferior grades of the ministry, and frequently, as in the case of Kentigern at Glasgow, by only one other bishop, instead of by three, as was elsewhere considered necessary. Such irregularities were, however, not altogether unknown in other countries, under special circumstances. A bishop might be the head of a monastery. If he was a member of one of which he was not the head, he, no less than the other monks, was subject to the rule of the abbot, even though the latter might be only a presbyter. But in such a case the abbot did not exercise any of those spiritual functions which had now come to be regarded as belonging exclusively to bishops, such as the right of ordaining deacons and presbyters; nor did he consecrate bishops or churches, or celebrate the communion with episcopal rites.

The Irish monasteries of the earlier ages were very humble structures, compared with those of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, whose splendid ruins now excite our admiration. They were formed of wood, or of wattles, and consisted of an oratory or church, with a group of "bothies," or huts, near it. The church had a small sacristy on one side of it. The domestic buildings included, in addition to huts for the monks, a kitchen, refectory, mill and kiln, and, at some little distance from the other erections, a guest-house, and a separate house for the abbot. The whole group was surrounded by a wall or rampart of earth, or of stone, or of both combined, like the fort of a chief. Indeed, it was not uncommon for a chief or provincial king, when he embraced the new faith, to give up his *rath* to the missionary, that he might construct his monastery within its inclosure. Besides the establishments on the mainland, many were placed, for greater security, on islands situated in lakes and rivers, as well as on the coast. The island of Aran, off the coast of Galway, contained no fewer than ten monasteries—all of them founded by St. Enda, who had been trained in the monastery of Whitherne. The employments of the monks were suitable to their respective capacities. The seniors were occupied chiefly with the church services, and the copying of manuscripts. Many were engaged in agriculture, or in handicrafts, or other necessary works within the monastery. The younger inmates received instruction from those of riper years. Much attention was given to this matter, and the monastery furnished not only to its own juvenile members the training required for their special duties, but secular education also to the other young men of the tribe, who, in order to secure this advantage, became temporary inmates of the institution. Such a method could not fail to diffuse a knowledge of the Gospel throughout every tribe in which a monastery had been founded, and, at the same time, to create a strong attachment to the "saint" who was its head, and to his self-denying associates.

The whole body of the inmates of a monastery were termed in the Celtic language its *muintir*, or monastic *family*. Sometimes this word included the monks of several lesser monasteries which were connected with the principal establishment, in which

the founder, or his successor, presided while ruling over them all, and also the vassals residing on the lands of the monastery. The smallest monasteries had usually not fewer than 150 members; the largest as many as 3000 or 4000. It is, however, probable that in some cases the latter numbers included also the inmates of dependent monasteries. The fact that so many were induced to enter these institutions is partly to be explained by the freedom and security enjoyed within them in times of almost constant strife and anarchy. The monasteries possessed the right of sanctuary, and jealously guarded it. It was believed—and the belief was encouraged by the monks—that any infringement of this, or other privileges, would expose its author to divine vengeance.

So corrupt and lawless was the state of society in pagan times, and so unprotected were life and property, that Christian piety could scarcely anywhere be cultivated except in the seclusion of the monastery. The clansmen might, in obedience to their despotic chief, be at any time obliged to follow him in his marauding expeditions; but when they assumed the monkish garb, they were freed from his control. The large numbers who flocked to these institutions were also partly due to the circumstance, that with the lands bestowed on a monastery were also frequently conveyed the patriarchal rights of chieftainship over their inhabitants. In such cases the powerful influence of the abbot, who was also chieftain of the clan, would be exercised in favour of the Christian faith, and in recommending to his people the monastic life.

Though the head of a monastery was sometimes a bishop, in most cases he was only a presbyter. On the occurrence of a vacancy in the abbacy, when the founder of a monastery and the person who endowed it with lands were of the same clan or family, this family appointed to the office a qualified person of their own kin, who was called the *co-arch*, or successor to the first abbot, and inherited his rights and jurisdiction. Failing a suitable person from among the nearest relatives, one was chosen from a collateral branch. But when the founder of a monastery and the chieftain who endowed it were of different clans, the successor to the abbacy was selected from the founder's kin, rather than from that of the chieftain; and when a fit

successor could not be obtained from this source, the Brehon laws—the ancient code of Ireland—laid down a minute system of rules by which the succession was regulated. As Dr. Todd justly remarks, the spirit of clanship is the key to Irish history; it pervaded the Church, as well as the civil institutions of the country.<sup>1</sup>

Other peculiarities of the early Irish Church are set forth in a document first published by Ussher, and believed to be of a date not later than the middle of the eighth century. It is called “A Catalogue of the Saints of Ireland according to their different periods,” and is so valuable and interesting that we give its chief portions below.<sup>2</sup>

This document indicates three successive stages in the organization of the Irish Church previous to the year 666. During the first period, the saints who were the founders of churches are stated to have been all bishops. The system adopted was that of Patrick, who appointed many bishops. Some of these founded monasteries, but their work was chiefly

<sup>1</sup> For the details contained in the foregoing sketch reference is made to the copious accounts of the Irish Church given in Todd’s “Life of St. Patrick,” *passim*, and Skene’s “Celtic Scotland,” vol. ii., chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> They are the following:—“The First Order of Catholic saints was in the time of Patrick; and then they were all bishops, famous and holy, and full of the Holy Ghost; 350 in number, founders of churches. They had one head, Christ, and one chief, Patrick; they observed one mass (or liturgy), one celebration, one tonsure from ear to ear. They celebrated one Easter, on the fourteenth moon after the vernal equinox, and what was excommunicated by one church, all excommunicated. They rejected not the services and society of women,” or according to another MS., “they excluded from the churches neither laymen nor women;” “because, founded on the Rock Christ, they feared not the blast of temptation. This order of saints continued for four reigns,” that is, till the year 534. The names of the four kings are then given. “All these bishops were sprung from the Romans, and Franks, and Britons, and Scots. The Second Order was of Catholic Presbyters. For in this order there were few bishops and many presbyters, in number 300. They had one head, our Lord; they celebrated different masses, and had different rules, one Easter on the 14th moon after the equinox, one tonsure from ear to ear; they refused the services of women, separating them from the monasteries. This order has hitherto lasted for four reigns,” that is, till the year 572. Then follow the names of the kings. “They received a mass from bishop David, and Gildas, and Docus, the Britons.” The names of twenty-five saints of this order are then given, including the two Finniains, two Brendans, Congall, Columba, and Caineach. “The Third Order of saints was of this sort. They were holy presbyters and a few bishops; 100 in number; who dwelt in desert places, and lived on herbs and water, and the alms (of the faithful); they shunned private property,” or according to another MS., “they despised all earthly things, and wholly avoided all whispering and backbiting,” “and they had different rules and masses, and different tonsures, for some had the coronal, and others the hair (behind), and a different Paschal festival. For some celebrated the Resurrection on the 14th moon, or 16th with hard (or different?) intentions. These lived during four reigns, and continued to that great mortality,” that is, till the year 666. The names of four kings, seven bishops, and eight presbyters are given.

This “Catalogue” is printed in Todd’s “Life of St. Patrick,” 88; and also in Skene’s “Celtic Scotland,” ii. 14.



carried on, as we know from other sources of information, apart from those institutions; and laymen and women were admitted into their churches. Thus at Armagh three women, one of whom was a sister or relative of St. Patrick, are said to have attended to the sacred vestments of the church, and seven others to have been also connected with the monastic society. Several of these women were of royal descent.<sup>1</sup>

This system, however, was not well fitted to evangelize a barbarous people like the Irish of that period. It would appear, moreover, that there had been a falling away from the faith after the death of Patrick, as there had been also among the Picts of Scotland subsequent to the time of Ninian; and that errors of doctrine had crept into the Church. To rectify these evils, and more effectually to subdue the remaining paganism, a somewhat different system was adopted by those who are termed the Second Order of the saints. These were for the most part presbyters, who considered it sufficient to have the power of administering the sacraments, and of conducting the Church services. Bishops, during this period, were few in number; and bishops and presbyters alike were under monastic rule. All, except when engaged in missionary or other necessary external work, resided within monasteries, from which women were excluded. The whole Church was not now subject to the rule of one chief, such as Patrick; but each of the different groups of monasteries acknowledged the jurisdiction of one principal establishment, over which the founder of the whole group, or his successor, presided. The saints of this, in common with those of the first period, observed the festival of Easter on the day sanctioned by ancient custom, and used the anterior tonsure—that is, they shaved the front of the head as far back as a line drawn from ear to ear. The Third Order of the saints were hermits or anchorites and were not, like the two previous orders, endowed with lands but lived on alms. Some of them shaved the crown of the head, leaving a circular ring of hair, which was called the coronal tonsure; and others shaved the front of the head. They also differed respecting the day on which Easter should be observed.

<sup>1</sup> Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," 504.



It is with the saints of the Second, or Monastic Order we are at present concerned. At the head of the list of them given in the foregoing Catalogue stand the two Finnnians. One of these, who was also called Finbarr, received his education in the monastery at Whitherne, which Ninian had founded. Having been afterwards consecrated a bishop, he established a flourishing monastery at Moyville, in the County Down. The other Finnnian, who was of the race of Irish Picts, after having been trained by a follower of St. Patrick, was for many years a disciple of the three fathers of monasticism in Wales—David, Gildas, and Docus or Cadoc—from whom the saints of the Second Order are stated in the Catalogue to have received a liturgy. Though, unlike his namesake of Moyville, he was only a presbyter, he founded a famous monastery at Clonard, in Meath, which is said to have contained 3000 monks. Thus the monastic system passed to Ireland both from Scotland and Wales. Finnnian's school at Clonard produced the celebrated saints who were termed the Twelve Apostles of Ireland, of whom Columba, by far the most distinguished, was the only one who went forth to preach the Gospel in a foreign land. Another of the Monastic Order of saints was Brendan of Clonfert, who, along with fourteen monks, is said to have made a seven years' voyage in search of the Land of Promise, and the history of which, whether true or fictitious, formed one of the most popular romances of the Middle Ages. After returning home, and visiting Gildas in Britain, he, previous to Columba's arrival in Iona, founded a church, with its monastic village, in Heth—the ancient name of the island of Tiree—and a monastery in the island of Ailech, apparently that now called Elachnave, one of the Garveloch group,<sup>1</sup> where are remains of a stone building, inclosed within a rectangular wall, which are not improbably its ruins. Brendan's memory is also perpetuated in the name of Kilbrandon Sound, the island of Culbrandon, and Kilbrandon parish.

The saints of the Monastic Order revived the decaying Church in Ireland through a vast increase in the number of monasteries, with which the whole clergy were soon con-

<sup>1</sup> See "Celtic Scotland," ii. 77.

nected. Moreover, the Christian zeal which was fostered by these institutions, aided by the love of foreign travel and adventure, which was so marked a characteristic of the Irish Scots, impelled successive swarms of monks to relinquish their native land for the conversion of the heathen, not only throughout the adjacent islands and mainland of Scotland and the north of England, but on the continent of Europe, and even in remote Iceland. A typical instance of this missionary ardour was furnished by Columbanus,<sup>1</sup> who, having been trained in Comgall's great monastery of Bangor, in the north of Ireland, passed over, along with twelve young men, to Gaul towards the end of the sixth century, and founded two monasteries in the forests of the Vosges Mountains, at Leuxeuil and Fontaine, which became centres of Christian instruction for the youth of the surrounding country. Having been afterwards obliged to quit Gaul, he travelled through Switzerland into Lombardy, and founded the monastery of Bobbio, in the Apennines. From him the town of San Colombano, in Lombardy, derived its name, as the town and canton of St. Gall, in Switzerland, were called after one of his disciples, also an Irishman.

We have seen that amongst the characteristics which marked the monastic Church of Ireland, were their form of tonsure and the day on which Easter was observed by them—matters which, though they may appear trifling to us, were then considered of vast, if not vital, importance. For about a century and a half after the termination of Roman dominion in Britain, there had been almost a total suspension of intercourse between the Continental Church and that of the British Islands. In consequence of this, changes in doctrine and ritual, which had during the interval been brought about in the former, were unknown in the latter. Columbanus was the first Irish missionary to the Continent, and the first also through whom intercourse with it was renewed, and the points of difference between the Irish and Roman Churches were brought to light. The attention of the Gallic ecclesiastics was arrested by the strange appearance of those Irish monks, who, in addition to peculiarities of dress, had the

<sup>1</sup> See "Celtic Scotland," ii. 6.

front of the head shaved from ear to ear, and the hair on the back of the head unshaved; whereas the tonsure then practised in Gaul and Italy consisted in shaving the crown as well as the back of the head, thus leaving a circular rim or "crown" of hair. It was soon found, also, that Columbanus and his monks celebrated Easter on a day different from that on which the Roman Church observed it. This difference was caused by a change which had taken place throughout the rest of Western Christendom in the mode of computing the proper day, while the Irish Church, being ignorant of the change, adhered to the previous practice. A controversy on the subject ensued between the Gallican bishops and Columbanus; and in a letter addressed to the Pope, to whom he appealed, he thus wrote in his own defence:—"We are Irishmen, inhabitants of the most distant country of the world, disciples of Peter and Paul, and of all the inspired writers of Scripture; and we receive nothing beyond the doctrine of the evangelists and prophets;"<sup>1</sup> and he claimed the right to follow the customs of his fathers, as belonging to a Church amongst the barbarians, and thus beyond the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, just as if he were still in his own land. In matters of doctrine, the Irish Church still adhered to the system which had prevailed before intercourse with Rome had been interrupted. It was thus free from many erroneous opinions and practices which, in the interval, had arisen in other Churches. There are probable reasons also for believing that the early Irish and British Church possessed a special version of the Old Latin Bible (which preceded the Vulgate in Western Christendom), differing both from all other known Ante-Hieronymian versions, and also from the Vulgate.<sup>2</sup>

Such were the chief characteristics of the early Church of Ireland; and the labours of Columba, in founding in our country a branch of that Church, have now to be described. We are fortunate in possessing two Lives of Columba written by his successors in the monastery which he founded in Iona. Cum-mene the Fair, the author of one of them, became abbot sixty

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in "Celtic Scotland," ii. 7, note.

<sup>2</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," i. 188.

years, and Adamnan, who wrote the other Life, eighty-two years after Columba's death. The latter incorporated the entire narrative of Cumme in the third Book of his own work, which he wrote, as he tells us, in compliance with the urgent request of his brethren in the monastery. Deeply tinged with the credulous spirit of the age, Adamnan's biography records, in the three Books into which it is divided, the miracles performed by Columba, his prophesies, and his visions, respectively. It relates the birth, parentage, and boyhood of the saint, and gives an account of his death; but contains no orderly narrative of the successive events of his life. The work is nevertheless invaluable as having been written at so early a period, amid the scenes which it describes, and before the circumstances of Columba's career were forgotten; and also as abounding in such incidental notices of persons and places, facts and usages, as throw a clear light on both the ecclesiastical and civil history of the period. While rejecting the supernatural element which pervades it, we may regard the memoir as otherwise authentic, since its author had in his boyhood opportunities of gaining information about Columba from the lips of those who had intimately known him, while he expressly informs us that his narrative is founded either on written authorities anterior to his own times, or on the most trustworthy oral testimony. Besides the works of Cumme and Adamnan, there is an old Irish Life of Columba, supposed to have been written in the tenth century. It is in the form of a discourse on his life and character to be read on his festival.<sup>1</sup> There is, further, the great work of Manus O'Donnell, chief of Tirconnel, compiled in the year 1532, in which are arranged chronologically not only the substance of the aforesaid Lives, but all the other existing records concerning Columba, his illustrious relative.<sup>2</sup> This elaborate Life, however, contains much traditional matter which cannot be regarded as trustworthy. The Aberdeen Breviary contains nine lections on Columba's life, abridged from Adamnan.

<sup>1</sup> Cumme's "Life of St. Columba" was printed by Pinkerton in his "*Vitæ Antiquæ Sanctorum Scotiæ*," 1789. The Life by Adamnan, edited by Dr. Reeves, was printed for the Bannatyne Club, and is now more accessible, forming, as it does, vol. vi. of the series of "*Historians of Scotland*." The manner in which Dr. Reeves has executed his task is beyond all praise. A translation of the Irish Life forms Appendix i. of Skene's "*Celtic Scotland*," vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> See Skene's "*Celtic Scotland*," ii. 80.

COLUMBA was born at Gartan, a wild district in the county of Donegal, where many memorials of him still exist. The date of his birth has been the subject of dispute, but most probably the event took place on the 7th of December, 521. Fedhlimidh, his father, was a grandson of Conall Gulban, one of the eight sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages, supreme sovereign of Ireland; and was also, through his mother, related to the king of British Dalriada. Eithne, the mother of Columba, belonged to the family reigning in Leinster, one of the four provincial kingdoms of Ireland. Columba was the nephew or distant cousin of the seven supreme monarchs of Ireland who successively reigned during his lifetime; and so close a connection with royalty must have greatly increased the influence which his personal character procured for him. His baptismal name was Colum—a common one in his time—which in Latin took the form of Columba, signifying a dove; and his constant attendance at the neighbouring church of Temple-Douglas led to his being called Columcille, or Colum of the Church—an epithet, however, which was not confined to him. After spending his youth in his native district, he travelled southwards to Moyville, and there studied in the monastery of St. Finnian, who, being a bishop, conferred upon him the order of deacon. Proceeding further southward, he became for a time the pupil of an aged bard, Gemman, by whom we may believe his natural love of poetry would be strengthened. He then entered the monastery of the other Finnian at Clonard, and thus received training in these two great monastic schools, one of which was derived from Whitherne, and the other from Wales. As Finnian of Clonard was not a bishop, Columba was afterwards ordained a presbyter by Etchen, bishop of Clonfad. When he left Finnian, he entered the monastery of Glasnevin, near Dublin, over which Mobhi, one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland, presided, where he had for his companions Comgall, Ciaran, and Cainnech, who, as well as Mobhi himself, had been his fellow-students at Clonard. Having quitted Glasnevin on account of a violent distemper which had broken out there, he returned to the north, and in the year 546, when he was only twenty-five years of age, received from Aedh, king of Ireland, and son of Columba's cousin-



german, his fort at Derry—now Londonderry—and founded a monastery within it. He afterwards founded the church of Raphoe, in Donegal. About the year 553 he established what became his chief monastery in Ireland, at Dair-mag, that is, the “Plain of Oaks,” now Durrow. In addition to these, he is said in the Irish Life to have founded many other monasteries, of which ten are mentioned by name. Some of them, however, may have owed their erection to his disciples.<sup>1</sup>

We come now to the most important event in Columba’s career, his departure from his own land to preach the Gospel in North Britain. The common account of this crisis, which is derived from O’Donnell’s Life of our saint and the authorities on which he founds, asserts that it was the result of a sanguinary feud in which he had been a party, and is as follows:—In the year 561 a battle was fought at Cooldrevny, in Connaught, in which the northern Hy Neill, including Columba’s tribe, the Cinel Conall, along with the people of Connaught, defeated Diarmid, king of Ireland, and the southern Hy Neill, of which he was chieftain. This conflict had been brought about by two causes. One of these was that King Diarmid had slain Curnan, son of Aedh, provincial king of Connaught, while he was under the protection of Columba. The other cause was that Columba having made a copy of a Psalter belonging to St. Finnian of Moyville, without his knowledge, which Finnian claimed as being rightly his, and the dispute having been referred to Diarmid, he decided in Finnian’s favour, on the principle that to every book belongs its copy, as to every cow her calf. For these reasons Columba instigated his kindred and their allies to give battle to Diarmid, and by his prayers procured for them the victory. A synod of the Church then pronounced Columba to have been the cause of the great slaughter which had taken place, and enjoined him to expiate his offence by winning for Christ as many souls from heathenism as had perished in the battle of Cooldrevny. They also condemned him to spend the remainder of his life in exile from Ireland. According to another account, Columba himself voluntarily resolved to become an exile. Setting sail, therefore, he first landed in Colonsay, but on discovering that from the highest ground in

<sup>1</sup> Reeves’ edition of Adamnan, xxxiii.—xxxvii., xlix. ; “Celtic Scotland,” ii. 55.

that island the coast of Ireland was visible—the spot being now marked by a cairn called *Cairn-Cul-ri-Erin*, or “Cairn-of-the-back-to-Ireland”—he re-embarked, and afterwards landed in Iona; and finding that Ireland could not be seen from the highest eminence of its southern portion—now also termed *Cairn-Cul-ri-Erin*—he resolved to settle in the island.<sup>1</sup>

Part at least of this story must be rejected. Adamnan mentions a visit which Columba paid to Finnian about the time of his sailing to Britain, when his old preceptor spoke to the brethren concerning him in terms of the most affectionate regard, which is inconsistent with the alleged quarrel about the Psalter; and so far from Columba remaining in perpetual exile from Ireland, we learn from Adamnan that he made very frequent visits to that country, and continued to rule over his Irish monasteries. It is not improbable, however, that he may have had some share in bringing about the battle of Cooldrevny. He was related to the leaders in it on both sides. Notwithstanding his earnest Christian faith and undoubted zeal in publishing the Gospel, there are traditions of his possessing—at least in the earlier portion of his career—a somewhat imperious temper; and impatience of contradiction was an infirmity to which, in common with many Irish saints, he was subject. He is said to have been an interested party in other subsequent feuds. It was thus in harmony with his character, and also with his circumstances, that he should have resented the violation of his protection through the slaughter of Curnan. The right of sanctuary was a privilege which Irish monasteries highly valued, and which, indeed, was necessary to their continued existence amid a lawless and sanguinary people. It is a significant fact that Adamnan twice mentions the battle of Cooldrevny in connection with Columba's sailing from Ireland, so that the latter event may have been in some way the result of the former, though it did not take place till two years after it. He also states that Columba had been excommunicated by a synod held at Teltown in Meath “for some pardonable and very trifling reasons, and indeed unjustly, as it afterwards appeared at the end, and that he came to the same meeting convened against himself,” but that St. Brendan

<sup>1</sup> Skene, “Celtic Scotland,” ii. 80.

of Birr declared the sentence unjust, and, when he saw him approaching, "quickly rose, and with head bowed down, reverently kissed him." The result was that the synod no longer held him excommunicated, but treated him with the greatest respect.<sup>1</sup> Though Adamnan does not say that it was on account of Columba's action in bringing about the battle of Cooldrevny he was excommunicated by the synod, but assigns this to reasons which he does not name, it appears not improbable that such may have been the ground of the sentence pronounced upon him. But as that sentence was recalled, his expatriation must be attributed to a different cause. Both Adamnan and the Irish Life state that he went abroad to preach the Gospel for the love of Christ, and know of no other motive which may have influenced him. To the same effect is the statement of Bede, that Columba came into Britain to preach the Word of God to the provinces of the northern Picts, while he gives no other reason for his departure from Ireland.<sup>2</sup> In sailing to Britain, he did no more than many of his countrymen, both previously and subsequently, did of their own free will.

Argyllshire was within a few hours' voyage from Ulster. Small islands had great attractions for Irish saints as sites for their monasteries, and the Scottish coast was dotted with such islands. Columba may have hoped to secure one of them as a base of missionary operations amongst the northern Picts. But while his principal object was the conversion of this people, he appears to have also desired to ameliorate the position of his own countrymen in British Dalriada. They had recently sustained a great disaster. While extending their territory in Argyllshire, they had come into collision with its former inhabitants, the Picts, and in the year 560—three years before Columba's arrival—had incurred the hostility of Brude, the powerful Pictish monarch. In a battle which ensued, Gabhran, the Dalriadic king, grandson of Fergus Mor, was slain, and his people were defeated and driven back into Kintyre.<sup>3</sup> An Irish chronicler, recording historical events under the form of a prophecy put into the mouth of St. Berchan, ascribes Columba's departure from Ireland partly, at least, to his sorrow

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan, bk. iii. chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> "Eccles. Hist.," bk. iii. chap. iv.

<sup>3</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 67; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 79.

on account of the subjugation of his countrymen in Britain to the Picts.<sup>1</sup> If he could effect the conversion of this pagan people, the result would be not only the extension of the Christian Church, but the mitigation of their hostility to the Dalriads, through the kindly influence of a common faith. Indeed, it is not improbable that for the attainment of the latter object King Connal, the successor of Gabhran, and a blood-relation of Columba, may have invited him to settle in his territory.

In the second year after the battle of Cooldevny, which was fought in 561, and in the forty-second year of his age, Columba, resolving to seek a foreign country for the love of Christ, sailed from Scotia, or Ireland, to Britain, accompanied "by twelve fellow-soldiers, his disciples."<sup>2</sup> In that year also we find him living in Britain with King Connal.<sup>3</sup> Tradition asserts that his first church in Scotland was a cave, which contains an altar and cross cut out in the rock, near the head of Loch Killisport, in North Knapdale.<sup>4</sup> The tradition is supported by the circumstance that Connal, his host, appears to have resided in the neighbourhood. According to the Irish annalist Tighernac, it was this king who bestowed on Columba the island of Iona.<sup>5</sup> Bede, on the other hand, says it "was by the donation of the Picts, who inhabit those districts of Britain, given over to the Scottish monks, because through their preaching they had received the faith of Christ."<sup>6</sup> Though these statements seem to contradict each other, both of them may yet be true. It appears that the three sons of Erc—Loarn, Fergus, and Angus—as well as Dormangart, the son of Fergus, had been buried in Iona.<sup>7</sup> From this it may be inferred that the Scots had acquired the island before Brude had driven them back into the peninsula of Kintyre. Though

<sup>1</sup> "Woe to the Cruithnigh (Picts) to whom he will go eastward,  
He knew the thing that is,  
Nor was it happy with him that an Erinach (Irishman)  
Should be king in the East under the Cruithnigh."  
—*"Chron. Picts and Scots,"* 82.

<sup>2</sup> Adamnan, *Second Preface*, and Pinkerton, "*Vitæ Sanctorum*," cap. iv.

<sup>3</sup> Adamnan, i. c. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "New Stat. Ac." vii. 263; Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, p. lxvi.

<sup>5</sup> Skene, "*Celtic Scotland*," ii. 85; "*Chron. Picts and Scots*," 67.

<sup>6</sup> "*Eccles. Hist.*" bk. iii. c. 3.

<sup>7</sup> "*Chron. Picts and Scots*," 151; Fordun, bk. iii. c. 24, edition 1872.

they had now been deprived of it, and though Connal's liberality may not appear excessive in granting to his kinsmen an island which was no longer his, yet, doubtless, the king still claimed, and hoped to recover, possession of it. On the other hand, Columba, in accordance with the Irish practice, would certainly endeavour to obtain a site and an endowment in land for his monastery from the clan of the district, who, at the same time, we may reasonably suppose, would be the first objects of his missionary labours. It is thus probable that while the King of Dalriada gave to the saint a nominal title to Iona, actual possession of it was conferred by the tribe of the land as a thank-offering for his Christian instruction. Be this as it may, from the intermediate position which the island occupied with respect to the territories of the Scots and Picts, it formed a convenient centre from which Columba could prosecute his labours amongst both races. To the gift of Iona was soon added that of several of the adjacent islands.

The Irish Life states that when Columba arrived in Iona "two bishops that were in the place came to receive his submission from him. But God manifested to Colum Cille that they were not in truth bishops; wherefore it was that they left the island to him when he exposed their real history and career."<sup>1</sup> From this, as well as other testimony, it appears that there had been previously a Christian establishment in Iona. Angus the Culdee, in his Litany, invokes "the seven bishops of Hii;" and, again, "the seven bishops of the church of Ia"—different forms of the name of the island.<sup>2</sup> It was evidently a collegiate church of that singular constitution which, as we have seen, had existed previously in Ireland. The two bishops whom Columba encountered may have been a survival from such a church. O'Donnel supposes that they were Druids in disguise, but of this there is no proof.<sup>3</sup> There is, however, a spot in Iona, at Martyrs' Bay, still termed the "burial-ground of the Druids;" and the name is founded on an old tradition that there were Druids in the place before the introduction of Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

The island which was to acquire undying celebrity from

<sup>1</sup> See Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 491.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. ii. 34.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid. ii. 88, *note*.

<sup>4</sup> Reeves' Adarnan, edition 1874, p. cxxxvi.



Columba had a variety of names. Those most frequently in use were Ia, I, Y, and Hy. From I, by the addition of the name of the saint, was derived Icolmkill. Cumme and Adamnan use the adjective form *Ioua insula*, or the Iouan island. The word Iona in Hebrew means a dove, and is supposed by Fordun to have been applied to the island as the equivalent of the name Columba, which in the Latin tongue has the same signification.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Reeves, however, comes to the conclusion that the form Iona originated in an error in writing the adjective *Ioua*, whose root was *Iou*; and that its use was confirmed by its supposed connection with the word Columba.<sup>2</sup>

Hy, or Iona, is about three miles in length and one and a half in breadth; and stretches from north-east to south-west. It is separated from Mull by what is now called the Sound of Iona, about a mile in width. Nearly a third part of the island is under cultivation, or fitted for it. The remainder is hill pasture, frequently broken up by projecting rocks. The greatest elevation is attained in the northern part at Dunii, which is about 330 feet in height. A fertile plain called the Machar stretches across the middle of the island, and there are tracts of low land also along the northern and eastern shores. The surface of the southern portion, like the greater part of the island, is very uneven; and on its highest eminence is Cairn-cul-ri-Erin, so called from an alleged incident in Columba's career, which has been already referred to. At Port-a-churaich, a small bay at the southern extremity of the island, the saint is said to have first landed with his twelve disciples in a curach, or boat covered with hides; and from this circumstance the name is derived. On the eastern shore are several other "ports," or landing-places. From the highest elevations are obtained extensive and striking views of many of the Hebrides.

In this age of locomotion Iona is visited by thousands who, while exploring the beauties of Highland scenery, specially desire to see "the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion." Many of these

<sup>1</sup> Fordun, bk. iii., chap. 26, edition 1872.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, p. cxxx.

visitors, it is to be feared, erroneously imagine that the existing ruins on the island are the remains of edifices which Columba erected, and in which he and his monks lived or worshipped. There are, indeed, in Iona many spots which possess an enduring interest, because they can with sufficient probability be identified as the scenes of incidents connected with the saint and his associates. But when we enter the abbey ruins we feel as if transported into an age very different from that of Columba. His monastery was constructed of wood and wattles, and has disappeared many centuries ago. The present ruins are not even those of the earliest stone edifices, but, with the exception of some detached chapels, are the remains of a Benedictine abbey and nunnery erected in the early part of the thirteenth century. It is the church of this abbey, used for a brief period before the Reformation as the cathedral of the Isles, whose roofless walls are the most conspicuous portion of the existing ruins. The oldest building now in the island is St. Oran's chapel, which is believed to belong to the close of the eleventh century. In Reilig Odhrain, or St. Oran's cemetery, which was probably so called because he was the first who was buried in it, and which surrounds this chapel, the Pictish and Scottish kings are said to have been interred down to the time of Malcolm Canmore, the husband of Queen Margaret, when Iona was superseded as a royal burying-place by Dunfermline.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Reeves inclines to the opinion that Reilig Odhrain was the cemetery of Columba's monastery, and that the monastery itself stood on the ground now partly occupied by the cathedral and its several appendages. Dr. Skene, however, adduces what appears to be conclusive proof that Columba's monastery was situated about a quarter of a mile north of the cathedral, where scarcely any vestige of it now remains except a portion of the rampart which inclosed it, and some traces of an old burying-ground which may have formed the last resting-place of the members of the brotherhood; unless, indeed, its name—Cladh-an-Diseart—may mark this rather as

<sup>1</sup> "*Rosse*. Where is Duncan's body?

*Macduff*. Carried to Colme's-kill,

The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,

And guardian of their bones."—*Shakespeare*, "*Macbeth*."

the cemetery of the anchorites who had their abode in that locality.<sup>1</sup>

Though the monastery has perished, many interesting facts regarding it are incidentally referred to by Adamnan. It appears to have been organized, as nearly as circumstances permitted, on the Irish model. Its most important structure was the oratory, or church, which was built of beams of wood. Attached to this was an *exedra*, or side chamber, used, doubtless, as a sacristy. There was a refectory, inclosing a large, flat boulder stone which, strange to say, served as a table. Adjoining the refectory was the kitchen, to which such of the monks as were engaged in study repaired in very cold weather to warm themselves. There was a guest-chamber, which was wattled. Surrounding a small court were the detached huts or cells of the brethren, formed of wattles or of wood. Columba's cell stood, somewhat apart from the other erections, on an eminence, from which he could view the whole monastery. It was built of beams or planks, and was provided with a lock and key. Here he sat, and wrote or read, waited on by an attendant who occasionally read to him, or by two, who stood at the door ready to receive his orders. Here also he slept on the ground, with a stone for his pillow. There was likewise a smithy; and it can scarcely be doubted that there was a carpenter's shop. Surrounding those structures was a *vallum*, or rampart, with its fosse, which appears not to have been of a circular form as in Irish monasteries. Probably outside of this were a barn, a kiln, and a mill driven by a stream of water which issued from the Lochan Mor, or mill-pond, situated west of the monastery. The cultivated land was the fertile plain called the Machar, in the middle of the island; while the land on the east side was used as pasturage. There the byre was situated. From the Machar, in harvest time, the reapers carried to the monastery loads of corn on their backs. Beside the arable land, however, there was a granary, and another near the monastery. The monks had in course of time a large supply of boats or ships of various sizes—some being constructed of wood, and others of wicker-work covered with hides; and both oars and sails were used. They had also small portable boats

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, p. cxxi.; "Celtic Scotland," ii. 100, 298.

for crossing rivers or inland lochs. The principal landing-place was probably that called Port-na-Muintir, or Harbour of the Community, close to the monastery. On the opposite coast of Mull was another harbour, from which persons desirous of being carried over to Iona called the attention of the monks by shouting loudly across the Sound—an incident of very frequent occurrence.

The head of the community was called Abbot, Holy Father, or Holy Senior; the members were collectively termed his *muintir* or family, and were addressed by him as such, or as his chosen monks. They were at first only twelve in number, besides the Abbot; but the society soon increased, and is described in the Irish Life of Columba as consisting of 150 persons under monastic rule; while the necessities of their insular position were such, that no fewer than sixty of this number are said in the same document to have been rowers of curachs. Like all other monks they were tonsured; and the tonsure they used was the anterior, extending from ear to ear. Candidates were sometimes received immediately on application, and in other cases after a lengthened probation. They were conducted to the church, and there on bended knees took a solemn monastic vow. Implicit obedience to the Abbot was binding on all. At his order every member was ready on the shortest notice to prepare for a long journey or voyage, or to do any kind of service, even in the most inclement weather. Humility was constantly practised. A visitor, on his arrival, knelt before the Abbot; and the members made known their wishes, even to a senior, in the same posture. Hospitality was generously dispensed to strangers, and the monastery was sometimes resorted to for medical relief. Celibacy was strictly enforced. There is a tradition that, as Columba suffered no woman to stay on the island, married tradesmen who wrought in it—and if such persons were ever employed, the occasions have been exceptional—were obliged to keep their wives and daughters in a neighbouring island, called Eilean na'm Ban, or Women's Isle, which lies close to the coast of Mull. The ordinary food of the monks was plain, consisting of bread, which was sometimes made of barley meal, milk, fish, eggs, and seals' flesh. On Sundays and festivals, and on the arrival of guests, there was an addition to



the principal meal; and mutton, or even beef, was probably allowed. Their dress consisted of a *cuculla*, having a body and hood, made of wool, and of the natural colour of the material; and a tunic or under-garment, which was white. In cold weather the *cuculla* was exchanged for a warmer cloak. When working or travelling, they wore sandals, which they removed before sitting down to meat.

Such of the monks as were of greater age and tried devotedness were termed "seniors;" those who were strong for labour, "working brothers;" and those who were under instruction, "alumni" or "juniors." Besides the professed members, there were generally present strangers, or proselytes, penitents and guests. In addition to their religious services in the church, which were conducted by the seniors, reading, writing, and labour were the stated employments. The chief subject of their study, as of their preaching, was the Word of God, and much attention was given to the committing to memory of the Psalter. Other books, both in the Greek and Latin languages, were also studied, including, probably, Lives of the saints. Writing was regarded as a most important occupation. Columba himself delighted in it, and practised it to the last day of his life. The literary apparatus included wax tablets for writing on. The Scriptures and Service-books were transcribed, in order to supply copies to the numerous churches as they came into existence. Exquisite skill and taste were shown in the ornamentation of manuscripts, especially of those of the Sacred Writings. Marvellous monuments of the decorative art of the Columban monasteries of Ireland are preserved in the Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow. The chief labour was agriculture in its various branches. To this were added fishing, the preparing of food, and the manufacture of the various articles required for personal or domestic use. There was a butler or *cellerarius*, who had charge of the refectory and its appointments; a baker, who in Columba's time was a Saxon; and doubtless also a cook, as well as other functionaries, though they are not specially mentioned.

It is probable that there was, in accordance with usual monastic practice, daily service at the canonical hours, although Adamnan is silent on the subject. Monks who were employed



on the farm were exempted from attendance during the day, and probably during the night also. The Eucharist was celebrated on the Lord's day, on saints' days, and at such other times as the Abbot might appoint. It included a commemoration or prayer for the souls of departed saints by name. It is called by Adamnan "the Mass," "the Sacred Mysteries," or "the Mysteries of the Sacred Oblation." The priest, standing before the altar, consecrated the elements. When several priests were present, one was selected for the office, who might invite another to break the bread of Life along with him in token of equality. When a bishop officiated at the altar, he brake the bread alone, in recognition of the superiority which by that time was believed to belong to his office. The brethren then approached the altar, and partook of the Eucharist. The observance of Sundays and festivals commenced after sunset of the previous day. The chief festival was Easter, and the Nativity also was commemorated. On extraordinary occasions the Abbot summoned the brethren by the sound of the bell to the church, even in the dead of night, and addressed them as they stood in their places; and having asked their prayers, he kneeled down himself at the altar, and sometimes prayed with tears. In certain cases the church was resorted to even on a winter night for private devotion. The sign of the cross was frequently used, as, for example, on the pail before milking, and on tools before they were used. This was considered effectual to banish demons, as well as to accomplish many other desired results. Columba was in the habit of blessing a great variety of objects, which thereafter were used as charms.

As regards penitential discipline, fasting was practised during part of every Wednesday and Friday, except in the interval between Easter and Whitsunday. During Lent the fast was prolonged till evening, except on Sundays. The Abbot prescribed penance, which in some cases extended to several years' banishment from Iona, for the commission of offences. The penitent had to confess his guilt in presence of the community, and generally on his knees. Extreme ascetics had a custom which, as we have seen, was attributed to St. Kentigern, of repeating the Psalter, or a part of it, while the body was immersed in water. Such persons, in order to give themselves

more entirely to solitary meditation, sometimes retired to a secluded spot near the monastery, without severing their connection with it. Their place of abode was called a "disert," from the Latin *desertum*. There was such a "disert" in Iona, near the shore, and east of Columba's monastery, as may be inferred from the name Port-na-discart given to a little bay, and Cladh-an-discart given, as we have seen, to a burying-ground in that locality. The individual who presided here was called Disertach, or Superior of the Hermitage. There was a "disert" also at the monastery of Kells, as well as at other places both in Ireland and, afterwards, in Scotland. Those who desired to undergo otherwise a special course of discipline for the deepening of their spiritual life placed themselves for a time under the direction of an *anmchara*, or soul-friend, and performed whatever exercises or austerities he imposed upon them.<sup>1</sup> Though such discipline, which was used only in exceptional cases, seems to have been accompanied by auricular confession, there is no reason to believe that there was any general adoption of this practice by the monks of Iona. There is, however, evidence that they offered up prayers for the dead, and believed in the efficacy of the intercession of departed saints, and their intervention in the affairs of the living. The Columban Church appears also to have held the doctrine of transubstantiation, or the conversion, after consecration, of the bread in the Eucharist into the body of Christ, and to have regarded it as a sacrifice for the living and the dead. To these opinions, which Protestants reject, were added many superstitions, in which the Celtic imagination was so prone to indulge. There is, however, no trace of the worship of the Virgin Mary. The doctrinal system of the Columban, as of the Irish Church, coincided generally with that which prevailed throughout Europe during the fourth century, ere intercourse had ceased between the Continent and the British Islands. There is not a vestige of proof that Columba acknowledged allegiance to the bishop of Rome, whose claims to supremacy, which had been more and more asserted during the interval of suspended intercourse, were unknown to the

<sup>1</sup> For the foregoing details regarding the monastery of Iona, and authorities in support of them, reference is made to Reeves' edition of Adamnan, *Introduction* and *Notes*.

monks both of Ireland and Iona. It was not till some time after Columba's death that Iona was brought into conflict with the pretensions of Rome.

As the monastery of Hy bore a close resemblance in its constitution and discipline to the parent institutions of Ireland, so it formed the model for many others which were afterwards founded in Scotland, and looked to it as their spiritual mother and head. For Columba's authority extended to all the monasteries, whether Irish or Scottish, which were founded by himself or his disciples. Nor was this authority weakened by his inferior ecclesiastical rank, which, as in the case of the abbots of some of the greatest monasteries of Ireland, was only that of presbyter. On this point the testimony of Bede is clear and emphatic. "That island," he says, referring to Iona, "has for its ruler an abbot who is a priest, to whose direction all the province, and even the bishops, by an unusual method—*ordine inusitato*—are subject, according to the example of their first teacher, who was not a bishop, but a priest and a monk."<sup>1</sup> Columba's ecclesiastical polity, however, has been the subject of much controversy between Presbyterian and Episcopalian writers. The former have contended that the system which he established in Iona embodied the principle of Presbyterian parity. The latter, on the other hand, have done their utmost to explain away Bede's description of the degraded position of bishops in their being subjected to the rule of a mere presbyter. The discussion has been conducted as keenly as if the character of the Church polity of primitive times could be determined conclusively and solely by Columba's procedure during the latter half of the sixth century. Historical facts, however, do not support the assertions of either party.

It is certain that long before Columba's time the distinction between presbyter and bishop, though unknown in the primitive Church, had been introduced into Ireland, probably from Gaul, where it was already established; and that ordination in the Irish Church was performed exclusively by bishops. We have also seen that in Ireland, when the whole of the clergy followed the monastic rule, a bishop, if the monastery con-

<sup>1</sup> "Ecc. Hist." iii. 4.

tained one, was subject to the Abbot, even though the latter might be only a presbyter. This, then, must have been the system which Columba imported into Scotland, unless he meant to set up a different system, of which there is no proof. It is true that Adamnan never mentions a bishop as an ordinary member of the monastery of Iona, nor any instance of an ordination there by a bishop. On the other hand, he is equally silent as to any ordination of presbyters by Columba or his monks. He states, however, that on one occasion a presbyter was ordained in a monastery in the island of Tiree, which was under Columba's authority, by a bishop who was sent for—*accito episcopo*—doubtless from Ireland, for that purpose. Adamnan also refers to visits of Irish bishops to Iona. It is recorded that on one occasion an Irishman named Columbanus, "coming to the island of Tiree to St. Columba, there received the episcopal grade, and again returned to his own country." The Irish Annals further mention five "bishops of Hy"—whom it would be more correct to describe as bishops *at Hy*—at various dates from the year 622 to 987.<sup>1</sup> The existence of bishops in the Columban Church is, moreover, apparent from the fact that the abbots of the monasteries of Lismore and Kingarth, in the island of Bute, were bishops. Thus, though it is unlikely that Iona possessed a bishop as an ordinary member of its monastery, it appears that one was occasionally to be found there as a visitor; and it seems reasonable to infer that by such an agent ordination of presbyters, an event which must have been of frequent occurrence, or even sometimes of a bishop, would be performed—for in the Celtic Church it was customary for a single bishop to consecrate another—but in all cases under the authority of the Abbot as the head of the brotherhood.

An incident recorded by Adamnan has an important bearing on the question under discussion. Cronan, a stranger from Munster, had come to Iona, and, through humility, concealed that he was a bishop. Next Lord's day, on his being invited by Columba "to consecrate the body of Christ, he asked the saint to join him, that as two priests they might break the bread of the Lord together." Columba, on going to the altar,

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan, i. 29: Reeves' edition (1874), *Notes*, ccxxxv.



discovered, in some way not specified, his ecclesiastical rank, and, suddenly looking into his face, thus addressed him:—"Christ bless thee, brother; break thou the bread alone according to the episcopal rite, for I know now that thou art a bishop. Why hast thou disguised thyself so long, and prevented our giving thee the honour we owe to thee?"<sup>1</sup> From this narrative it is evident that Columba recognized the distinction, which by that time had been introduced, between a presbyter and a bishop, and gave honour to the stranger as possessing the higher grade. It thus appears that Presbyterian parity did not exist in Iona, or in the Columban Church; but when this has been conceded, the question, whether the government of the primitive Church was Presbyterian or Episcopal, remains untouched, and has to be determined by facts which belong to a period several centuries before Columba was born, and which show that Episcopacy was not the original form of Church polity, but a later growth. An instance of the alleged ordination of a bishop by the presbyter-monks of Iona will come before us at a subsequent stage of our narrative.

While it must thus be admitted that there were bishops in the Columban Church, it is evident that their position in it was a very humble one. Though they ordained presbyters, as well as other bishops, yet in the performance of this function they were subject to the commands of the presbyter-abbot, whose position quite overshadowed theirs; and they could ordain no one without his warrant. In the government of the Church they had no more influence than the humblest member of the monastery. It is thus evident that they were separated as by a great gulf from the prelates of later times.

When Columba had landed in Iona, and chosen a site for his monastery, his first care would no doubt be the erection of the structures required for the shelter of the brethren, and for the celebration of divine service. Early attention, too, would be given to the cultivation of the soil, on whose produce the society was mainly to depend for subsistence. Such matters would probably for a considerable time prevent him from undertaking missionary work beyond the districts im-

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan, i. 35.



mediately adjacent. The monastery, when fully organized, being, if not the first institution of the kind planted in those northern regions—for there were others previously in Tiree and Hinba—yet the first in size and importance, would excite a lively interest both among the Scots of Dalriada and the Pictish population; while its influence could not fail to be enhanced by the blameless lives of its members, who had left their native country to settle on this lonely island. Moreover, its Abbot not only bore a high reputation for sanctity, and possessed many rare personal gifts, but his royal descent enabled him to wield a spiritual influence as great as the secular power of those kings and chieftains by whom he was treated as their equal and friend.

Two years after his arrival in Iona Columba resolved to visit Brude, the powerful Pictish monarch, whose conversion to the Christian faith, if it could be brought about, would powerfully promote the purpose of his mission to our country.<sup>1</sup> Brude's royal seat was near the river Ness, and probably at Craig Phadric, where there are remains of a vitrified fort. In his journey thither Columba was accompanied by two celebrated Irish ecclesiastics, Comgall of Bangor and Cainnech of Achaboe,<sup>2</sup> who, being Picts, might be expected to conciliate a monarch belonging to the same race. Of his reception by Brude there are several accounts. The *Irish Life* states that when he approached, "the gate of the castle was shut against him. But the iron locks of the town opened instantly through his prayers." Adamnan views the incident through a still denser atmosphere of miracle. The king, he informs us, would not open his gates on the first arrival of Columba. "When the man of God observed this, he approached the folding-doors with his companions, and having first formed upon them the sign of the cross of our Lord, he then knocked at, and laid his hand upon the gate, which instantly flew open of its own accord, the bolts having been driven back with great force. The saint and his companions then passed through the gate thus speedily opened. And when the king learned what had occurred, he and his

<sup>1</sup> Bede, who assigns Columba's arrival in Britain to the year 565, makes the conversion of Brude and his people precede the donation of Iona (*"Ecl. Hist.,"* iii. 4).

<sup>2</sup> *"Vit. S. Comgalli,"* chap. 44, quoted by Skene, *"Celtic Scotland,"* ii. 107.

counsellors were filled with alarm; and immediately setting out from the palace, he advanced to meet with due respect the blessed man, whom he addressed in the most conciliating and respectful language. And ever after from that day, so long as he lived, the king held this holy and reverent man in very great honour, as was due.”<sup>1</sup> The Pictish Chronicle states that Brude was baptized in the eighth year of his reign by Columba.<sup>2</sup> As the date appears to coincide with the time of this visit, if, with Ussher, we place the commencement of his reign in the year 557, we may conclude that it was on this occasion the king’s conversion took place, though the question is not free from difficulty.

Columba’s encounters with the Druid of Mailcu, the son of Brude, and others of the same class, have been already noticed. Adamnan tells us of a singular method which the saint adopted for silencing certain Druids; and the incident at the same time illustrates the remarkable power of his voice. It probably took place during his first visit to the king. “When Columba was chanting the evening hymns with a few of the brethren, as usual, outside the king’s fortifications, some Druids, coming near to them, did all they could to prevent God’s praises being sung in the midst of a pagan nation. On seeing this, the saint began to sing the forty-fourth Psalm; and at the same time so wonderfully loud, like pealing thunder, did his voice become, that king and people were struck with terror and amazement.” Adamnan also informs us that though “to those who were with him in the church (in Iona) his voice did not seem louder than that of others, yet at the same time persons more than a mile away heard it so distinctly, that they could mark each syllable of the verse he was singing, for his voice sounded the same whether far or near.”<sup>3</sup> Reverting to the Druids, we can perceive that Columba held the same belief as his biographer, that God sometimes allowed them, with the aid of evil spirits, to raise tempests and agitate the sea; and, it may be added, to perform many other miracles. One superstition begets another. As it was thought that results like these were produced by the Druids with the help of demons, so, on the other hand, it was believed that the saints held intercourse with angels, and thus

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan, ii. 36.

<sup>2</sup> “Chron. Picts and Scots,” 7.

<sup>3</sup> Adamnan, i. 29.

obtained their assistance. Even Columba himself could, on one occasion, see in a thunder-cloud a host of demons, and in the lightning flashes the iron darts with which they wished to assail his monastery, till they were vanquished by the angels who came to his aid, and driven from the island.<sup>1</sup>

The conversion of King Brude was the capture of the citadel of paganism, and the destruction of the power of the Druidical priesthood. Christianity would now become the national religion of the Picts, though intelligent belief in its doctrines could only be gradually diffused amongst them. For many years after his first visit to their monarch, Columba appears to have zealously prosecuted his missionary work among the tribes who dwelt north of the Grampian range. There is mention of his presence in several islands, and also at various places between the western coast and the German Ocean, such as Skye and some of the Argyllshire islands, Ardnamurchan, Lochaber, Glenurquhart, localities near the river Ness, and even in the far-off district of Buchan. The dates of these visits, however, are not given. Unless when sailing in a curach, he travelled on foot, and was usually accompanied by several of his monks. Long and toilsome must have been many of his journeys through regions so wild and mountainous. He is not mentioned as preaching to assembled multitudes, but rather as instructing separate families and individuals, baptizing old and young, relieving the wants of the poor, defending the feeble, and denouncing and punishing their oppressors. There can be little doubt that he carried on his work chiefly by founding monasteries, and by placing in them small bodies of monks, who, by their pure and peaceful lives and self-denying labours, commended to the people around them the faith which they preached.

In the year 574, eleven years after Columba's first arrival in Iona, occurred the death of his friend and kinsman Conall, king of Dalriada. By the law of that period, which conferred the right of succession on the individual nearest to the original stock, Eogan, cousin of Conall, should have succeeded him. Through Columba's influence, however, Aidan, Eogan's brother, was raised to the throne; and having come to Iona, Columba

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan, iii. 9.

there consecrated him king of Dalriada, by laying his hand upon his head and blessing him. He at the same time prophesied that Aidan would be succeeded in the regal dignity by three generations of his descendants.<sup>1</sup> This is said to have been the first authentic instance of the Christian consecration of a sovereign—a statement which, as regards Western Europe at least, may be correct. Columba afterwards took Aidan with him to a great Irish convention at Drumceatt, near his own monastery of Derry, consisting of the provincial kings, chieftains, and leading ecclesiastics. On this occasion the saint was attended by many bishops, priests, and deacons; and the imposing appearance of such a retinue would indicate the extent of his authority and influence. At the convention he procured the future exemption of the kingdom of Dalriada from the payment of tribute to the supreme monarch of Ireland. Its people were still, however, bound to join their Irish kindred in warlike enterprises when called upon to do so. Dalriada, thus ceasing to be a mere colony subject to the mother country, was for the first time constituted an independent state. This was the true commencement of the Scottish kingdom; and Aidan must be regarded as its first sovereign, and the founder of the dynasty from which the reigning monarch of these islands is descended. At the convention of Drumceatt Columba also exerted his influence in favour of the poets of Ireland. Claiming from the tribes the right of sustenance for themselves and their very numerous retinues, they had become burdensome, and on this account had been banished from the country. Columba, who was himself a poet, obtained their recall from exile, on condition that their retinues should be considerably reduced. Dallan Forgaill, the chief poet of Ireland, evinced his gratitude for the saint's efforts in behalf of the fraternity by composing in his honour a poem called the "Amra," or the praise of Columcille, the daily recital of which was afterwards superstitiously used as a charm, ensuring, as was believed, admission into heaven.<sup>2</sup>

Columba had thus in twelve years attained some of the chief objects of his mission to our country; and as the friend both of

<sup>1</sup> "Chron. Piets and Scots," 67; Adamnan, iii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 123-125.



the Pictish and Dalriadic kings, and the head of many monasteries both in Ireland and Scotland which were subject to his authority, he occupied a position of dignity and influence which was altogether unique. To the inmates of these institutions, both Scottish and Irish, collectively, was applied the term "the family of Iona" in its wider sense. Adamnan refers to the Columban monasteries within the territories of both Picts and Scots as being regarded with the greatest respect by both peoples down to his own time.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately he mentions but few of them by name, nor does he give the dates at which these were severally founded. Two of them—those of Deer and Hinba—one of which was a Pictish, and the other a Scottish monastery, possess a special interest, though for different reasons. Our knowledge of the first is derived not from Adamnan, who nowhere mentions it, but from the Book of Deer. This remarkable volume, which is now in the possession of the University of Cambridge, is the only literary memorial of the old Pictish Church which has come down to us, and, next to the Schaffhausen manuscript of Adamnan's "Life of Columba," which was copied in Iona by Dorbbene in the beginning of the eighth century, is the oldest existing book written in Scotland, and relating to it and its Gaelic literature.<sup>2</sup> It is an imperfect copy of the Gospels in the Latin of the Vulgate version. It belonged to the first or Columban monastery of Deer, and is believed to have been written in the ninth century. Its peculiar value consists in the circumstance that on its blank pages and margins are recorded in the Gaelic language, but in a handwriting two centuries later than the date of the original contents, the tradition of the foundation, by Columba and his nephew Drostan, of the monasteries of Aberdour and Deer. This record well illustrates the manner in which those Christian institutions were planted among the pagan tribes by the grant of a *cathair*, or "city," from the chieftain, and the settlement in it of a small body of clerics, according to the method followed in Ireland. Columba's procedure is thus picturesquely described:—"Columba and Drostan, the son of Cosgreg, his disciple, came from Hii, as God had shown to them, to Aberdoboire (or Aberdour). And Bede the Cruithnech

<sup>1</sup> Book ii. 47.

<sup>2</sup> See Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874; xxv., 218, 299, 335.



(or Pict), was Mormaer of Buchan before them; and it was he that granted that city unto them, in freedom for ever from mormaer and tosech. Thereafter they came into another city, and it was pleasing unto Columcille, because it was full of the grace of God; and he asked of the Mormaer, that is, Bede, that he would give it unto them; and he gave it not; and a son of his took a sickness after refusing the clerics, and he was nigh unto death. Thereafter the Mormaer went to beseech the clerics to make prayer for his son, that health might come to him; and he gave in offering to them from Cloch-in-tiprat to Cloch-pette-mic-Garnait. They made the prayer, and health came to him. After that Columcille gave to Drostan that city, and blessed it, and left as his word, 'Whosoever should come against it would not be long-yearred and victorious.' Drostan's tears—*deara*—came on parting with Columcille. Said Columcille, 'Let Dear be its name henceforward.'"<sup>1</sup> Drostan's labours, however, were not confined to Buchan, but, as may be inferred from the dedications to him, which were fifteen in number, extended over a large district in the north-east of Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

The island of Hinba, which has been identified with Elachnave, Eileann na Naoimh, or Ilachanu, is the most westerly of the Garveloch group, situated between Scarba and Mull. Near the middle of the island are some remarkable ruins, evidently the remains of a monastery. The four walls of a small church, now roofless, are still standing. South-west of the church is a group of buildings apparently of a domestic character. At a little distance from these are two large rectangular inclosures, one of which was doubtless used as a garden. The other was a burying-ground, and contains a few rude grave-stones. Eastward, on the summit of a knoll, stands a small building of rectangular form. North-east of this is another structure which was evidently a kiln. Near the shore is a well. At a considerable distance from the rest of the buildings, and on ground sloping southward to the shore, are the most remarkable of all the structures on the island—two cells of the "bee-hive" shape, connected with each other by a very low doorway. One of these is tolerably

<sup>1</sup> Book of Deer (Spalding Club), 91; also National MSS. of Scotland. i. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes' "Kalendars," *sub voce*.

complete in its northern half, and its dome-shaped roof is composed of closely compacted masonry. The other is entirely ruinous. In a different place there is another cell so small that it is only about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in width. Its depth at present is about 4 feet. It is roofed with flat slabs, and is almost wholly beneath the level of the ground. Its entrance is immediately under the roof.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that these remains are so well preserved is due to their being situated on an island which is uninhabited and seldom visited. It has now been placed beyond reasonable doubt that they are the remains of the monastery of Hinba, founded by Columba, and that the existing buildings belong to his time. Adamnan frequently mentions this monastery; and the ruins on Elachnave, as well as other circumstances, correspond so closely with what is recorded concerning Hinba as to shut us up to the conclusion that the two names denote the same place.<sup>2</sup> The buildings, being of stone, and thus still partly preserved, may serve to show the character of those of Iona, which, having been constructed of perishable materials, have passed away. Here, then, we have the rude domestic edifices in which the brethren of this primitive monastery resided, the church in which they worshipped, the kiln in which they dried their grain, the garden in which they cultivated a few vegetables, the well which supplied them with water, and the graveyard in which their mortal part found a resting-place when their hard life was ended. In the detached building on the eastern eminence we probably see the separate cell in which, according to the usual plan of such institutions, the Abbot resided, and from which, following the example of Columba in the parent monastery of Iona, he could overlook the whole establishment. These conclusions are strengthened by the name Tobar Cholum-na-chille, or St. Columba's Well, given to the little spring near the shore. The tradition, however, that a slab with an incised cross, which stands on a knoll westward of the ruins, marks the grave of Eithne, the mother of Columba, can hardly be regarded as authentic.

<sup>1</sup> The ruins previously mentioned as existing on the island are situated apart from this group.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874; Skene's *Appendix*, p. 318.

Adamnan informs us that the saint appointed Ernan, his uncle, an aged priest, to preside over the monastery of Hinba. Here Columba was visited by four renowned founders of monasteries, namely, Comgall, Cainnech, Brendan, and Cormac, at whose request he consecrated, in their presence in the church, the holy mysteries of the Eucharist. Here too, according to Adamnan's story, the saint, in a mental ecstasy, was commanded by an angel to consecrate Aidan as king of Dalriada. Hinba is also mentioned as the scene of several other incidents. It would appear to have been used as a place of discipline, or penance, to which monks retired from Iona when they wished, or were required, to undergo a course of austerities. Thus we find that on one occasion Columba came to the island, and gave orders that even the penitents should enjoy an indulgence with respect to their food; and when one of them declined to accept the indulgence, the saint prophesied that he would yet have to eat man's flesh, which, of course, came to pass. Adamnan also tells us that Virgnous, having come over from Ireland and lived without reproach among the brethren, led the life of an ascetic for twelve years more in the place of the anchorites in Muirbulmar, which was in the island of Hinba, till his death.<sup>1</sup> This statement probably explains the use of the bee-hive cells. The Celtic monks frequently retired to such hermitages, some of which still exist in Ireland in good preservation. Muirbulmar may have denoted the cells we have described. If so, it is interesting to reflect that these singular structures furnished for so many years a retreat to this very anchorite. The third and much smaller cell was probably also used for ascetic purposes, though in what manner it may be impossible precisely to ascertain. We have seen that a frequent penitential exercise of Celtic saints of that period was to chant the psalms while standing in cold water. This small cell, if filled with that element, which might happen in rainy weather, would be well adapted for a discipline so severe and dangerous. Be this as it may, we may see in the ruins on Elachnave not only an illustration of the monastery of Iona, but the most ancient monastic buildings now existing in Scotland in such a state

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan, i. 15, 35; ii. 25; iii. 6, 18, 19, 24.

of preservation as to enable us to form definite conclusions respecting their character and use.<sup>1</sup> And very vivid is the impression they convey of the hardships to which their pious inmates submitted for the cultivation of their own spiritual life, and as a training for their missionary work.

Other island monasteries were founded by Columba and his disciples. Two were situated in a place which Adamnan calls "Ethic Terra." This has been identified with Tir-Eth, or "the land of corn," now Tìree, an island celebrated for its fertility. One of these was called Magh-Luinge, or the plain of Lunge. Its head was Baithene, Columba's cousin, and one of the twelve disciples who first accompanied him to Iona.<sup>2</sup> The other monastery was termed Art-chain, and appears to have been founded by Findchan, who was also one of Columba's monks, and, like him, though a presbyter, exercised authority over a bishop.<sup>3</sup> The two earlier monasteries in Tìree, founded by Brendan and Comgall respectively, had probably been destroyed by the heathen Picts. The monastery of Elena, there is reason to believe, was situated in Isla, and Lugneus Mocumin, another of Columba's twelve disciples, became its abbot.<sup>4</sup> There were also two monasteries in Skye, the ruins of one of which are still to be seen on an island in Loch Cholumcille; and there were many in other islands and in the Western Highlands bearing our saint's name, most of which were probably founded by him. On the mainland, Adamnan mentions two, which were apparently situated in an island in Loch Awe and in Morvern respectively.<sup>5</sup>

During Columba's life other Irish saints took part in the same work, and doubtless under his superintendence. Lugadius, or Moluoc, established a monastery in the island of Lismore. He was descended from Conall Gulban, the ancestor of Columba, and was a bishop; as was also Neman, one of his successors in Lismore, who died in 611. The churches of Rosemarky and Mortlach, besides thirteen others both north and south of the Grampians, were dedicated to St. Moluoc, and were prob-

<sup>1</sup> It is proper to state that part of this description of the monastery of Hinba, and a few sentences on a preceding page, are taken from an account of a visit to the island, which the present writer contributed to a serial publication.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., i. 29, and p. 304.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ii. 18, and p. 324.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., i. 25, and p. 327.

ably founded by him, but his dedications are most numerous in the western islands. His *bachul*, or pastoral staff, is still preserved, and is in the possession of the Duke of Argyll.<sup>1</sup> Cathan, also a bishop, founded the monastery of Kingarth, in Bute, and the numerous churches called Kilchattan are named after him.<sup>2</sup> Donnan, another Irishman, established a monastery in the island of Egg. He and his monks, fifty-two in number, suffered martyrdom while celebrating the Eucharist on Sunday the 17th of April, 617—twenty years after Columba's death. The sad story is as follows:—"This Donnan went to Columcille to make him his soul-friend (*anmchara*), upon which Columcille said to him, I shall not be soul-friend to a company (or to those who shall be heirs) of red martyrdom; for thou shalt come to red martyrdom, and thy people with thee. And it was so fulfilled. Donnan then went with his *muinntir* (or monastic 'family') to the Hebrides, and they took up their abode there, in a place where the sheep of the country were kept. This was told to the queen. Let them all be killed, said she. That would not be a religious act, said her people. But they were murderously assailed. At this time the cleric was at mass. Let us have respite till mass is ended, said Donnan. Thou shalt have it, said they. And when it was over, they were slain every one of them." Their wooden church appears to have been at the same time burnt. Such martyrdom, however, was exceptional, the history of the evangelization of Scotland, as of Ireland, being singularly free of cases of persecution. The church in Egg was at a subsequent period restored. Kildonan, in Sutherland, and ten other churches or chapels dedicated to this saint, were probably founded by him. At Auchterless his pastoral staff was preserved till the Reformation.<sup>3</sup>

The missionary labours of Columba and his associates were not confined to the territory north of the Grampians. There are distinct traces of their presence also amongst the southern Picts, who, during the century and a half which had elapsed since their conversion by Ninian, appear to have for the most part fallen back into heathenism. After the death of King Brude,

<sup>1</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 67; "Celtic Scotland," ii. 133; Forbes' "Kalendars," 410.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes' "Kalendars," 298.

<sup>3</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, ccxcvii.



which occurred in the year 584, the Pictish throne was occupied by Gartnaidh, whose royal seat was at Abernethy, on the south bank of the Tay, and near its junction with the Earn. Here this monarch established, or restored, a monastic church, whose original foundation, as we have seen, has been ascribed to Nectan, who reigned from the year 457 to 481. Columba preached the Gospel to the tribes around the Tay, and the foundation or restoration of the church of Abernethy was evidently the result of his labours, which, we know, were facilitated by the king's influence and residence in the locality. Cainnech of Achaboe, who is so frequently mentioned in connection with Columba, and who founded several monasteries, appears to have co-operated with him at this time, and to have established a monastery at Rigmonadh, now St. Andrews, where for some time he inhabited a hermitage. This was, apparently, the first church founded at that place; and to this church the historic Regulus—an Irishman, as we have seen—probably also belongs.<sup>1</sup> It may have been during these journeyings of Columba south of the Grampians that his meeting with Kentigern, already described, occurred. Blaan of Kingarth, son of King Aidan and nephew of Cathan, previously mentioned, founded the church of Dunblane, which is called his "chief city," though he is referred to as bishop of Kingarth.<sup>2</sup> The extension of the Columban Church among the southern Picts is further demonstrated by the dedication of Markinch to St. Modrustus or Drostan of Deer, of Lesmahagow and Wigtown to Machut, a disciple of Brendan; and also by the fact that many other churches situated on the south as well as on the north of the Grampians were called after the names of disciples or associates of Columba. Dr. Reeves gives us a catalogue, which is by no means exhaustive, of twenty-one Columban foundations among the Picts, besides thirty-two among the Scots, and thirty-seven in Ireland. Those situated in our own country are found in districts so remote as Orkney in the north, and Dumfries and Galloway in the south. It is probable that many monasteries or churches which owed their origin to Columba or to the monks of Hy, afterwards ceased to bear any trace of their

<sup>1</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 201; "Celtic Scotland," ii. 137, 268.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 138.

connection with, and subjection to, the parent church, and were called by the names of their immediate founders or patron saints. Thus the church of St. Dochonna, or Mochonna, who is said to have been sent by Columba with twelve companions to the Picts, was probably at first subject to Iona; but when it became independent it was known as St. Machar's of Aberdeen.<sup>1</sup>

Some time after the year 585, at which date Columba was sixty-four years of age, Adamnan states that the saint was residing for a few months in the midland parts of Ireland, and that he paid a visit to St. Ciaran's monastery of Clonmacnoise. The warm reception which the brethren there gave to him is thus described:—"As soon as it was known that he was near, all flocked from their little grange farms near the monastery, and, along with those who were within it, ranged themselves with enthusiasm under the Abbot Alither. Then, advancing beyond the inclosure of the monastery, they went out as one man to meet St. Columba as if he were an angel of the Lord. Humbly bowing down, with their faces to the ground, in his presence, they kissed him most reverently, and, singing hymns of praise as they went, they conducted him with all honour to the church. Over the saint, as he walked, a canopy made of wood was supported by four men walking by his side, lest the holy abbot St. Columba should be troubled by the crowd of brethren pressing upon him."<sup>2</sup> Ciaran was highly esteemed by Columba, and was well known and much revered in Scotland, where he is commemorated at Kilkerran in Kintyre, and seven other places.<sup>3</sup>

When thirty years of Columba's sojourn in Scotland had been completed, that is, in the year 593, he had some ailment which gave him warning of his approaching death; for this seems to be the real meaning of a vision which he is said to have had of angels sent to meet his soul when it should depart.<sup>4</sup> He lived on, however, for four years more, and died in 597, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. Very touching is the account which Adamnan gives of his death, though we reject the miraculous incidents. One day near the end of May, Columba, worn out with age, having gone in a car to the western side of the island to visit some of the brethren who

<sup>1</sup> See Reeves' Adamnan, p. lx.   <sup>2</sup> Adamnan, i. 3; Reeves' Adamnan (Bannatyne Club), 24.

<sup>3</sup> Forbes' "Kalendars," *sub voce*.

<sup>4</sup> Adamnan, iii. 23.

were there at work, told them that he had desired to depart to Christ during the Easter solemnities of the preceding April, but that his departure had been put off a little longer, lest a joyous festival should be turned into mourning. The monks, on hearing this sad news, were greatly afflicted, and the saint endeavoured to console them. He then turned his face to the east, being still seated in his chariot, and blessed the island with its inhabitants; after which he was carried back to the monastery. While he was celebrating the Eucharist as usual on the following Lord's day, which appears to have been the second day of June, his face, as his eyes were raised to heaven, "suddenly appeared as if suffused with a ruddy glow," the cause of which, he stated to the brethren, was that an angel had looked down upon them within the church and blest it, having been sent "to demand a certain deposit dear to God," by which the saint meant "his own soul that had been entrusted to him by God."

In the end of the same week, "on the day of the Sabbath," that is, our Saturday, Columba, with his pious attendant Diormit, went to the barn; and having entered it, and blessed it and two heaps of winnowed corn that were in it, he said, "I heartily congratulate my beloved monks that this year also, if I am obliged to depart from you, you will have a sufficient supply for the year." On hearing this, Diormit said, "This year, at this time, father, thou very often vexest us by so frequently making mention of thy leaving us." Then the saint, having made his attendant promise, which he did on his bended knees, that he would not reveal to any one before his death a secret he was going to tell him, said: "This day is in the Holy Scriptures called the Sabbath, which means rest. And this day is indeed a Sabbath to me, for it is the last day of my present laborious life, and on it I rest after the fatigue of my labours; and this night, at midnight, which commenceth the solemn Lord's day, I shall go the way of our fathers. For already my Lord Jesus Christ deigneth to invite me, for so hath it been revealed to me by the Lord himself." Diormit then began to weep bitterly, and the saint did what he could to console him. After this he left the barn, and in going back to the monastery rested half-way at a place where a cross which

was afterwards erected, and was standing in Adamnan's day fixed into a mill-stone, might be observed on the roadside, and there came up a white pack-horse which used to carry the milk vessels from the cow-shed to the monastery. It came to the saint, and, strange to say, laid its head on his bosom, and began to utter plaintive cries, and, like a human being, to shed copious tears, foaming and greatly wailing. The attendant, seeing this, began to drive it away, but the saint forbade him, saying, "Let it alone, as it is so fond of me—let it pour out its bitter grief into my bosom. Lo! thou, as thou art a man, and hast a rational soul, canst know nothing of my departure, except what I myself have just told you; but to this brute beast, devoid of reason, the Creator himself hath evidently in some way made it known that its master is going to leave it." And saying this, he blessed the workhorse, which turned away from him in sadness.

Columba then ascended the hillock which overlooked the monastery, and, having stood for some time on its summit, with uplifted hands, he blessed the monastery in these prophetic words:—"Small and mean though this place is, yet it shall be held in great and unusual honour not only by Scotie kings and people, but also by the rulers of foreign and barbarous nations, and by their subjects. The saints also even of other churches shall regard it with no common reverence." After these words he descended from the hill, and, having returned to the monastery, sat in his cell transcribing the Psalter. Having come to that verse of the thirty-third Psalm—the thirty-fourth in our version—where it is written, "They that seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good"—"Here, at the end of the page," he said, "I must stop; and what follows let Baithene write."

He then went to the church to celebrate the nocturnal vigils of the Lord's day; and as soon as this was over, he returned to his cell, and spent the rest of the night on his bed, where he had, says Adamnan, a bare flag, but according to Cummene, his earlier biographer,<sup>1</sup> the bare ground for his couch, and for his pillow a stone. While reclining there he gave his last instruc-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxi. (Pinkerton, "*Vitae Sanctorum Scotiae*," 1789, p. 40; Metcalfe's edition 1889, p. 64).

tions to his brethren in the hearing of his attendant alone, saying, "These, O my children, are the last words I address to you, that ye be at peace, and have unfeigned charity among yourselves; and God, the comforter of the good, will be your helper, and I, abiding with Him, will intercede for you, and He will supply your wants in this life, and bestow on you the eternal rewards which are laid up for those that keep his commandments." After these words he became silent. Then, as soon as the bell tolled at midnight, he rose hastily and went to the church; and, running more quickly than the rest, he entered it alone, and knelt down in prayer beside the altar. Diormit, his attendant, who followed him more slowly, saw from a distance that the whole interior of the church was filled with a heavenly light in the direction of the saint; but as he drew near to the door, the same light, which a few more of the brethren had also seen from a distance, quickly disappeared. Diormit, entering the church, cried out in a mournful voice, Where art thou, father? and, feeling his way in the darkness, as the brethren had not yet brought in the lights, he found the saint lying before the altar, and, raising him up a little, he sat down beside him, and laid his head on his bosom. Meanwhile the rest of the monks ran in with their lights, and, beholding their father dying, burst into lamentations. The saint, however, his soul having not yet departed, opened wide his eyes, and looked round him from side to side, with a countenance full of joy, as if seeing the holy angels coming to meet him. Diormit then raised his right hand, that he might bless the brethren; but the venerable father himself moved his hand at the same time as well as he was able; and, having in this way given them the benediction, he immediately breathed his last. "His face still continued ruddy, and brightened in a wonderful way by the angelic vision, so that he had the appearance not so much of one dead as of one who slept." His death thus occurred very early in the morning of Sunday, the 9th of June, 597, when he had spent thirty-four years in Scotland.

When the matin hymns were finished, his body was carried by the brethren, chanting psalms, from the church back to his cell, and his obsequies were celebrated with all due



honour and reverence for three days and nights; and when God's praises were ended, his body, having been wrapped in a clean shroud of fine linen and placed in a coffin, was buried with all due reverence. The stone which had served him for a pillow was placed as a kind of monument at his grave, where it still stood in Adamnan's time. A storm of wind and rain blew so violently during the three days and nights which intervened between the saint's death and burial that it entirely prevented any one from crossing the Sound, and his obsequies were thus attended by none except the members of the monastery.<sup>1</sup>

To this account of Columba's death may be added Adamnan's estimate of his character. "From his boyhood," he says, "he had been brought up in Christian training in the study of wisdom, and by the grace of God had so preserved the integrity of his body and the purity of his soul, that, though dwelling on earth, he appeared to live like the saints in heaven. For he was angelic in appearance, graceful in speech, holy in work, with talents of the highest order, and consummate prudence; he lived a soldier of Christ during thirty-four years in an island. He never could spend the space of even one hour without study, or prayer, or writing, or some other holy occupation. So incessantly was he engaged night and day in the unwearied exercise of fasting and watching, that the burden of each of these austerities would seem beyond the power of all human endurance. And still in all these he was beloved by all, for a holy joy ever beaming on his face revealed the joy and gladness with which the Holy Spirit filled his inmost soul."<sup>2</sup>

Though Adamnan's Life of Columba is avowedly a panegyric on his gifts and graces, we may yet assent with but small reservation to the high praise he bestows upon him. Of the miraculous incidents with which the biography abounds, many could doubtless be explained by natural causes; the others were imagined or invented by his devoted followers. But through the mythical haze which has thus been thrown around him we can discern the features of a truly great and good man. There were, indeed, certain occurrences in his career—and they are not mentioned by Adamnan—which present him in an

<sup>1</sup> Adamnan, iii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Second Preface.

unfavourable light. He appears to have been concerned in two battles in Ireland, besides that of Cooldrevny already noticed, one of which took place twenty-four years after his settlement in Iona.<sup>1</sup> But while lamenting his connection with these, we must remember that it was his relation to the leaders of the opposing factions which involved him in their contests; and we must take into account the customs of his age and nation. It was not uncommon for Irish ecclesiastics of that period even to engage personally in warfare. In the year 673 a battle was fought between the monks of Clonmacnois and Durrow—monasteries founded by Ciaran and Columba respectively—in which 200 of them were slain. Till the year 804 the monastic communities of Ireland were bound to render military service. In that year, and thereafter, they were exempted; yet in 816 a contest took place between two other monastic fraternities, in which 400 were slain.<sup>2</sup> Even from Adamnan's narrative, however, it is evident that Columba was a man of strong passions, and did not always refrain from resenting an injury. Thus when Joan, a hardened oppressor and plunderer, was embarking with his booty, the saint followed him to the water's edge, and, wading into the sea up to the knees, with both his hands raised towards heaven, prayed that the robber might be punished.<sup>3</sup> But though he was a wrathful man when under strong provocation, it is evident that there was in him a deep fountain of tenderness and affection, which was ever overflowing in words and deeds of kindness. Only thus can we explain the intense love and veneration entertained for him by his immediate disciples and associates. Even the lower animals were the objects of his loving care. He was always thinking of the welfare of others rather than of his own. Poverty and affliction enlisted his sympathy and active help. He was compassionate towards the penitent; and with their tears he mingled his own. He strove to overcome the enmity of his opponents by kindness and generosity. Incidents revealing these more gentle and lovable features of his character abound in Adamnan's pages.

Columba is traditionally represented as of lofty stature and commanding presence. We have seen that he had a voice

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, xlvii. (edition of 1874).    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. xlviii.    <sup>3</sup> Adamnan, ii. 23.

of wonderful power. These, along with his great mental gifts, must have made him a persuasive orator. Of many poems which have been ascribed to him—some written in Latin, and others in his native Gaelic—the few of which he was probably the author evince true poetic genius. He was a born ruler of men; and the influence which his mental and moral qualities procured for him must have been in many ways increased by his connection with royalty. The predominating features of his character were earnestness and enthusiasm; and these he consecrated to the service of his divine Master. His perseverance and success in diffusing the light of the Gospel for the first time throughout a great part of our country, and in placing its Church on a permanent foundation, entitle him to be reckoned Scotland's chief apostle. Viewing him as engaged in his great missionary enterprise, "it is easy," in the eloquent words of a distinguished writer, "to represent to ourselves the tall old man, with his fine and regular features, his sweet and powerful voice, the Irish tonsure high on his shaven head, and his long locks falling behind, clothed with his monastic cowl, and seated at the prow of his coracle, steering through the misty archipelago and narrow lakes of the north of Scotland, and bearing from isle to isle, and from shore to shore, light, justice, and truth, the life of the conscience and of the soul."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Count de Montalembert, "The Monks of the West," iii. 268.



## CHAPTER VI.

## EXTENSION OF THE COLUMBAN CHURCH TO NORTHUMBRIA.

Columba's successors in Iona—Mission of Augustine—His arrival in Kent—His success—Mission of Paulinus to York—His temporary success—Conversion of King Edwin—Relapse to paganism—Aidan sent from Iona—The Church permanently restored—Aidan founds the bishopric and monastery of Lindisfarne—The monastery of Old Melrose—Aidan is succeeded by Finan—Monastery of Coldingham—Extension of the Columban Church to Mercia and Essex—Finan is succeeded by Colman—Controversy about Easter and the Tonsure—Increase of Romanism—Council of Whitby—Romanism triumphs, and Colman returns to Iona—Life and work of Cuthbert—Diocese of York extended to the Grampians—Battle of Dunnichen and its results—Death of Cuthbert—Monastery of Tynningham—Baldred of the Bass—Bishopric of Strathclyde—Anglic bishopric of Candida Casa.

AFTER Columba's death Iona retained its supremacy over all the monasteries and churches, whether in Ireland or Scotland, which had been founded by himself or his followers. To the character of the subsequent Abbots Bede bears the following honourable testimony:—"Whatsoever Columba was himself, this we know for certain, that he left successors renowned for their continency, their love of God, and observance of monastic rules. It is true they followed uncertain rules in their observance of the great festival, as having none to bring them the synodal decrees for the observance of Easter, by reason of their being so far away from the rest of the world; wherefore they only practised such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the Prophetical, Evangelical, and Apostolical writings."<sup>1</sup> A long succession of Irishmen filled the office of Abbot of Iona, and of the first eleven there was only one who was not of Columba's kindred. He was immediately followed by Baithene, his cousin, who had been superior of the monastery of Magh-Luinge, in Tیره, and was nominated to the like office in Iona by Columba himself. He held it only for two years, and died on the anniversary of the death of the founder. Laisren, the next Abbot, was the son of a cousin of Columba, and had been superior of his monastery of Durrow, in Ireland. His tenure lasted only five years; and in 605 he was succeeded by Fergna Brit, who

<sup>1</sup> "Eccl. Hist." iii. 4.

had been a monk of Iona in Columba's lifetime, when he is said to have been "a youth of ardent piety." He was followed in the year 625 by Segine, nephew of the third Abbot. During his term of office the Columban Church was extended to the kingdom of Northumbria, which reached to the Firth of Forth; and the work of its missionaries throughout this territory has now to be described.<sup>1</sup>

When Columba was spreading the light of the Gospel in North Britain, it was well nigh extinguished in the southern portion of the island. The heathen Anglo-Saxons were in possession of almost the whole country. In their warlike operations against the Britons, "public as well as private structures were overturned; the priests were everywhere slain before the altars; the prelates and the people, without any respect of persons, were destroyed with fire and sword; nor was there any to bury those who had been thus cruelly slaughtered."<sup>2</sup> Such of the clergy as could escape had taken refuge in Wales, and paganism was triumphant throughout the territory which its new inhabitants were beginning to call England.

This state of things was now to cease. Bede informs us how a desire for the conversion of the English people took possession of an Italian monk. The story was evidently embellished in the cloister, yet we may well believe it to be founded on an actual occurrence. One day some merchants arrived in Rome, and were exposing their wares in the market-place. Among the crowd who resorted thither to purchase was Gregory, the abbot of a convent which he himself had founded in the city. His attention was arrested by the appearance of some boys who, among other objects, were also there on sale. Admiring their fair complexion and beautiful features, he asked from what country they were brought, and was told they came from Britain. He then inquired whether those islanders were Christians, and was informed they were pagans. Then with a deep sigh he said, "Alas! what pity that the author of darkness is possessed of men of such fair countenances; and that being remarkable for such graceful aspects, their minds should be void of inward grace." Again he asked what was the name of that people, and was

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' *Adamnan*, cxlvii.-viii.

<sup>2</sup> Bede, "*Eccles. Hist.*," i. 15.



answered that they were Angles. "Right," said he, "for they have an Angelic face, and it becomes such to be co-heirs with the Angels in heaven. What," he further inquired, "is the name of the province from which they are brought?" It was replied that the natives of that province were called Deiri. "Truly are they *De ira*," he said, "withdrawn from wrath, and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of that province called?" They told him his name was Aella; and, alluding to the name, he said, "Hallelujah, the praise of God the Creator must be sung in those parts."<sup>1</sup>

Gregory's proficiency as a punster was equalled by his zeal as a Christian. Forthwith he entreated the Bishop of Rome to send missionaries to England, and offered to undertake the work himself. But the Roman people resisted the removal from their city of one so learned and renowned. Gregory, however, who was destined to be known in history as Gregory the Great, was afterwards raised to the Papal throne. No sooner had he attained this dignity than he sent Augustine and some forty monks to preach the Gospel to the English. Landing in the Isle of Thanet in 597—the year in which Columba died—and bringing interpreters with them, they were well received by Ethelbert, king of Kent, who assigned to them a residence and sustenance in Canterbury, his capital city. Bertha, the queen, being of the royal family of the Franks, was already a Christian; and her husband soon became a convert. Augustine and his brother monks were zealous and successful in their labours; and the people, encouraged by the king's conversion, daily flocked to hear the Word of God. It is an interesting circumstance that Augustine at first preached in St. Martin's church at Canterbury, which had been built while the Romans were still in the land, and in which the queen was wont to pray. Gregory instructed him not to demolish the heathen temples, in which oxen had been sacrificed to false gods; but, having destroyed the idols in them, to purify them, and convert them into Christian churches. Augustine, having repaired by the Pope's command to Arles, was there consecrated archbishop of the English nation. Returning to England he received from Gregory vessels and ornaments for the churches, vestments

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Ecl. Hist.," ii. 1.

for the clergy, relics of the saints, many books, and for himself the pall.<sup>1</sup>

From Kent the Gospel was brought to the Northumbrians. Edwin, their king, from whose name is derived that of Edwin's burg, now Edinburgh, though, like his people, a pagan, had obtained in marriage Ethelberga, daughter of Ethelbert, king of Kent, on condition that, as she was a Christian, she should be allowed to practise her religion. A bishop—Paulinus by name—was therefore ordained by Justus, archbishop of Canterbury, in the year 625, and sent along with Ethelberga to her husband at York. Edwin, who used to sit for hours alone, seriously pondering what religion he should follow, afterwards held a council with his wise men, and asked each of them what he thought of the new faith and worship. Coifi, the chief of the pagan priests, declared that though he himself had been a diligent worshipper of their gods, others had been more prosperous in their undertakings than he; and he therefore advised the king to examine into the new doctrines. Another counsellor made the following remarkable speech:—"The present life of man, O king, seems to me, in comparison of that time which is unknown to us, like to the swift flight of a sparrow through the room wherein you sit at supper, in winter, with your commanders and ministers, and a good fire in the midst, while the storms of rain and snow prevail abroad. The sparrow, I say, flying in at one door, and immediately out at another, while he is within, is safe from the wintry storm. But after a short space of fair weather he immediately vanishes out of your sight into the dark winter from which he has emerged. So this life of man appears for a short space; but of what went before or what is to follow, we are utterly ignorant. If, therefore, this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed."

The other counsellors spoke to the same effect. Coifi, after listening to the preaching of Paulinus, cried out, "I have long since been sensible that there was nothing in that which we worshipped, because the more diligently I sought after truth in that worship, the less I found it;" and, confessing that truth and eternal happiness were to be found through the

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Ecc. Hist.," ii. 1; i. 23-26, 29.

Gospel, he counselled the king to burn the pagan temples and altars. Edwin then announced himself a convert to the faith of Christ, and publicly gave permission to Paulinus to preach it to his subjects. When the king inquired who should first profane the altars and temples of their idols, Coifi declared that he himself would do so. It was previously not lawful for the high-priest to carry arms, or to ride on any animal but a mare. He now mounted a stallion, rode up to the pagan temple, profaned it by casting into it a spear, and commanded his companions to burn it. King Edwin was baptized in the year 627, in a church which he had built of timber while receiving Christian instruction; and all his nobles and many of the common people followed his example. He appointed York as the see of the bishopric of Paulinus. So willing were the people of Bernicia to embrace the new faith, that at a place called Adgefrin, now Yevering, one of the Cheviots near Wooler to which they resorted from all the villages around, Paulinus stayed thirty-six days, engaged in teaching them, and in baptizing them from morning to night in the river Glen.<sup>1</sup>

Such is the story of the conversion of the Angles of Bernicia, as told by Bede. A different account is given in the genealogies affixed to the historical work of Nennius. It is as follows:—"Eadguin, or Edwin, received baptism at Easter, and 12,000 men were baptized along with him. If any one should wish to know who baptized them, Rum, the son of Urbgen, baptized them; and for forty days did not cease to baptize the whole nation of the Ambrones; and through his preaching many believed in Christ."<sup>2</sup> This Urbgen is identical with Urien of the Welsh pedigree of St. Kentigern. According to the foregoing statement Rum would be that saint's uncle; and, as Edwin was baptized in the year 627, the uncle would survive the nephew, who died at a very advanced age, which is not likely. Though Gildas charges the Britons with the guilt of never preaching the Christian faith to the Saxons who dwelt amongst them,<sup>3</sup> St. Kentigern, as we have seen, was innocent of such neglect. The Church of Cumbria may therefore have had some influence in the conversion of the

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist." ii. 9; 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," p. 13; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist." i. 22.

Angles of Bernicia, whose territory was conterminous with Cumbria on the west. The statement in Nennius can hardly be accepted, however, as a whole, in preference to that of Bede.

The Church which Paulinus thus founded in Northumbria was of brief duration. Penda, king of Mercia, a pagan, and Caedwalla, king of the Britons, a renegade Christian, having made war on Edwin, he was killed in battle in the year 633, and all his army was either slain or dispersed. The victors, and especially Caedwalla, made great havoc amongst the Christians of Northumbria, sparing neither age nor sex, but putting women and children to cruel deaths. Queen Ethelberga and bishop Paulinus fled back by sea to Kent, and the country again came under pagan influence. Paulinus was afterwards made bishop of Rochester.<sup>1</sup> The subsequent restoration of the Church in Northumbria was effected by missionaries from Iona, operating from monasteries which they founded on the Columban model; and it was by the same agency that the Gospel was brought to the Anglic population of the districts between the Tweed and the Forth.

King Edwin, who was thus slain in the seventeenth year of his reign, had succeeded his father Aella in Deira when a child. On his attaining to manhood, he had been driven from his throne by Ethelfrid, who ruled over Bernicia, and who now united in his own person the sovereignty of both provinces. In 617, however, Edwin gained possession of the two provinces by defeating and slaying Ethelfrid, and expelling his sons in turn. These youths, with many of the nobility, then fled from Northumbria, and lived in banishment among the Scots and Picts, where they were instructed according to the doctrine of the Scots, and received baptism. On the death of Edwin they returned home; and Eanfrid, the eldest, succeeded to the throne of Bernicia, while the government of Deira devolved on his cousin Osric, who had been converted by Paulinus. Both of them then renounced the Christian faith, and were soon afterwards slain by Caedwalla. Oswald, second son of Ethelfrid, now advanced against Caedwalla, whom he defeated and slew in the battle of Heavenfield, near Hexham, and thus secured the sovereignty of all Northumbria.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist." ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., iii. 1, 2.



Iona had been the place of Oswald's exile. Thither he had been taken when about thirteen years of age, and his residence had extended to sixteen or seventeen years during the abbacy of Fergna and that of his successor Segine. On his ascending the throne of Northumbria, which event took place in 635, when he was thirty years of age, he at once proceeded to have the Church restored in his dominions. For this purpose "he sent to the elders of the Scots," says Bede, "among whom himself and his followers, when in banishment, had received the sacrament of baptism, desiring they would send him a bishop, by whose instruction and ministry the English nation, which he governed, might be taught the advantages and receive the sacraments of the Christian faith. Nor were they slow in granting his request." The person whom they first sent was, however, not a bishop, but a priest. Being of an austere disposition, and meeting with no success in his mission, he returned to Iona, and in an assembly of the elders reported that he had not been able to do any good to the Angles, on account of their stubbornness and barbarism. They then in a great council debated what was to be done; and a monk named Aidan, who was present in the council, said to the returned priest, "I am of opinion, brother, that you were more severe to your unlearned hearers than you ought to have been; and did not at first, conformably to the apostolic rule, give them the milk of more easy doctrine till, being by degrees nourished with the Word of God, they should be capable of greater perfection, and be able to practise God's sublimer precepts." Having heard these words, "all present began diligently to weigh what he had said, and presently concluded that he deserved to be made a bishop, and ought to be sent to instruct the unbelieving and unlearned, since he was found to be endued with singular discretion, which is the mother of other virtues; and accordingly, ordaining him,<sup>1</sup> they sent him to their friend King Oswald to preach."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In order to get rid of the supposed ordination of a bishop by presbyters, some Episcopal writers have disingenuously translated Bede's words, *illum ordinantes*, "being ordained," instead of "ordaining him." It is surprising to find Dr. Skene among the number. See the passage in Giles' translation of Bede, and Skene's "Celtic Scotland," ii. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist." iii. 3. 5.



Bede's statement, that "a great council"—which was probably nothing more than a full assemblage of the monks of Iona under the presidency of Abbot Segine—ordained Aidan, has been held to prove that in the Columban Church ordination was performed by presbyters. Such an inference would be fully justified if there were no other evidence on the question; and if the presbyters of Iona had ordained Aidan a bishop, their procedure would have been in conformity with the custom which existed in the Church of Alexandria, where, so late as the fourth century, the presbyters both appointed and consecrated the bishop.<sup>1</sup> In determining this question, however, we must take into account the fact that, before the period of which we are now treating, episcopal ordination both of bishops and presbyters had been everywhere established. We have seen that the distinction between a bishop and a presbyter was recognized both in the Irish Church and by Columba himself in the Church of Iona, which was a branch of it; that there existed a bishop in some other Columban monasteries of Scotland, if not in Iona; and that in one instance, at least, a bishop had been sent for by the superior of a monastery when a presbyter was to be ordained. In view of these facts the reasonable conclusion seems to be, that if there was no bishop in Iona, one would be procured from Kingarth or Lismore, or from some other Scottish or Irish monastery, by whom, acting under the authority of the council, Aidan would be ordained; unless we are to suppose that the abbot and monks of Iona had renounced the tenets of their mother Church. Bede's statement that the council ordained Aidan may thus be explained on the well-known principle, that what an individual does through the agency of another is reckoned and described as done by himself. The word "bishop" in Bede's narrative has, however, by some been thought to signify nothing more than the office of one designated to a particular charge, as that of planting a church among the Angles; while a presbyter was viewed merely as a preacher at large.<sup>2</sup> But these suppositions are negatived by the circumstance that the monk who was first sent from Iona

<sup>1</sup> See Bishop Lightfoot on "Epistle to the Corinthians," p. 231, and the authorities quoted by him.

<sup>2</sup> Jamieson, "Hist. Ac. of the Culdees of Iona," 331.

to Northumbria is called by Bede not a bishop, but a priest, though the mission on which he was sent was precisely the same as that to which Aidan was afterwards appointed. The difference between a bishop and a presbyter or priest was in Bede's estimation so important, that we must believe he used these words advisedly. Moreover, if the presbyter-monks of Iona had themselves ordained Aidan to the higher office of bishop, the fact would have appeared to the monk of Jarrow so extraordinary, that he would doubtless have expressly called the attention of his readers to it, as he has done in reference to the subjection of bishops to the presbyter-abbot of Iona. Ordination by presbyters rests on other and better grounds than the practice of the seventh century.

Of Aidan, who was held in so high estimation by his brethren in Iona, nothing more is known before he was sent to Northumbria, except that he had probably founded the church of Inch-adyn, which was situated near the mouth of Loch Tay and on the north bank of the river Tay, and is now represented by the church of Kenmore. On his arrival in Northumbria, he obtained from King Oswald permission to fix his episcopal seat in the small island of Lindisfarne, now called Holy Island, separated from the coast by a channel of about two miles in width, which is dry twice a day at the ebb of the tide. Here he founded a monastery which, both in situation and constitution, was a copy of that of Iona, except in having, in him, a bishop as its head.<sup>1</sup> Bede informs us that while his successors, with consent of the monks, chose the abbot who governed the monastery, the priests, deacons, and other officials, with the bishop himself, observed in all things the monastic rule.<sup>2</sup> Like Iona, also, in its relation to Pictland, Lindisfarne became a centre of missionary operations throughout the kingdom of Northumbria. As Christianity would be most successfully preached to the Angles by their own countrymen, and in their own language, Aidan, at the very commencement of his episcopate, selected twelve boys of their nation to be instructed at Lindisfarne in the Christian faith.<sup>3</sup> He also founded monasteries on the model of Iona. One of these was

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Ecc. Hist." iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. "Life of St. Cuthbert," 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. "Ecc. Hist.," iii. 26.

at Mailros, now called Old Melrose, a peninsula formed by a bend in the river Tweed, two and a half miles below the site of the Cistercian abbey founded in the twelfth century by King David I. The peninsula "is overhung on the further side by the lofty and precipitous banks of the river, and is strongly guarded by natural defences on every quarter except the south, where a wall was drawn across the narrow isthmus."<sup>1</sup>

In his efforts for the evangelization of Northumbria Aidan was willingly assisted by King Oswald. As the bishop's native language was Gaelic, he was not skilful in the English tongue; and, when he preached the Gospel, "it was most delightful," says Bede, "to see the king himself interpreting the Word of God to his commanders and ministers, for he had perfectly learned the language of the Scots during his long banishment. From that time many of the Scots came daily into Britain, and with great devotion preached the Word to those provinces of the Angles over which King Oswald reigned; and those among them that had priest's orders administered to them the grace of baptism. Churches were built in several places. The people joyfully flocked together to hear the Word. Money and lands were given of the king's bounty to build monasteries. The Angles, great and small, were by their Scottish masters instructed in the rules and observance of regular discipline; for most of them that came to preach were monks." From these statements it appears that the Columban monks were not all ordained presbyters, and that preaching was not confined to those who were in orders.

When Oswald had reigned eight years he was slain in battle by Penda, king of the Mercians; and was succeeded by his brother Oswy, who placed Oswin, the son of Osric, as ruler over the province of Deira. Oswy was constantly harassed by Penda, as his brother Oswald had been, till he defeated him and the Britons who were in alliance with him, in a battle which was fought probably near Manuel, on the south side of the Forth. Penda himself was there slain. Besides the Britons of Alclyde, Oswy brought under subjection the Southern Picts and the Scots of Dalriada; and this state

<sup>1</sup> "New St. Ac.," iii. 56.

of things continued for thirty years. But as Christianity had been so lately restored in Northumbria by missionaries from the Columban Church, the mother Church in Scotland would doubtless not suffer from this revolution.

Aidan died on the last day of August, 651, in the seventeenth year of his episcopate, and was interred in the conventual cemetery of Lindisfarne. Bede describes his character in terms of the highest praise. He was possessed of singular meekness, piety, and discretion; and was a lover of peace and charity. His mind was superior to anger and avarice. He despised pride and vain-glory. He was diligent in keeping and teaching the commandments, in reading and watching. He reproved the haughty and powerful, comforted the afflicted, relieved and defended the poor, and omitted nothing which he found in the Apostolical or Prophetical writings. He was wont to retire to the Isle of Farne, that he might there practise devotion undisturbed. He travelled not on horseback but on foot, unless compelled by some urgent necessity, and embraced every opportunity of preaching the Gospel to pagans, and of stirring up believers to alms and good works. On one occasion King Oswin had given him an exceedingly fine horse for the performance of his journeys. A poor man having soon after met him, and asked alms, he immediately dismounted, and ordered the horse with its royal trappings to be given to the beggar. When Oswin remonstrated with him for giving away so valuable a horse, he replied, "What is it you say, O king? Is that foal of a mare more dear to you than the Son of God?" and the king fell down at his feet, and besought his forgiveness. With the money which he received as gifts from the rich he often ransomed those who had been sold as slaves, taught them religion, and advanced them to the priesthood. His daily employment, and that of his companions, whether they were shorn monks or laymen, was to read the Scriptures and learn Psalms; and on the rare occasions when he was invited to eat with the king, he went with one or two clerics, and, having taken a frugal repast, made haste to be gone with them, either to read or write. He fasted during part of Wednesdays and Fridays, and in this many religious men



and women followed his example. Yet one thing he lacked; he did not keep Easter at the proper time.<sup>1</sup>

Aidan's successor was Finan, who also was ordained by the Scots and came from the same monastery of Hii.<sup>2</sup> He built at his episcopal seat in Lindisfarne a church of hewn oak, and covered it with reeds after the manner of the Scots. One of his successors removed the thatch, and covered both roof and walls with plates of lead. In Finan's time was founded the abbey of Coldingham. It was built near St. Abb's Head, a promontory consisting of a huge mass of trap, three sides of which are nearly perpendicular rocks of great height, facing the sea, while its fourth side, connecting it with the mainland, is defended by a deep fosse and a stone wall. The founder and first abbess of the monastery was Ebba, daughter of King Ethelfrid of Northumbria, sister of King Oswald, and half-sister of King Oswy. It embraced separate communities of monks and nuns, both being governed by Ebba, from whom the name of the promontory is derived.

As Christianity had been restored and permanently established in Northumbria by Aidan, so through Finan's agency it made further and extensive conquests. Previous to the death of Penda his son Peada had sought in marriage a daughter of King Oswy. His request could not be granted unless he would embrace the faith of Christ. Having heard the Gospel preached, he declared he would willingly become a Christian even though the princess should be withheld from him. He and all his retinue were accordingly baptized by Finan. Returning home, he took with him four priests, one of whom, named Diuma, was a Scot, to instruct and baptize his nation. Through their preaching multitudes of all classes believed and were baptized. Diuma was afterwards ordained bishop of the Mercians by Finan. His successor was Ceollach, another Scot, who, however, did not long retain his bishopric, but returned to Iona. Trumhere, who succeeded him, though an English monk, was also ordained a bishop by the Scots.<sup>3</sup>

The East Saxons had previously embraced Christianity, and

<sup>1</sup> The churches of Cambusnethan, Menmuir, and Fearn, besides that of Kenmore, were dedicated to Aidan.

<sup>2</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist." iii. 17, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. iii. 21.



then renounced it. Sigebert, their king, often went to Northumbria to visit King Oswy, and was there, with his companions, baptized by Finan. When he returned home, Finan sent with him Cedd and another priest to preach the Gospel to his subjects. Cedd afterwards returned to Lindisfarne to confer with bishop Finan, who, on learning how successful he had been, ordained him bishop of the East Saxons, having procured other two bishops to assist at the ordination. Now possessing episcopal authority, Cedd returned, built churches, ordained priests and deacons, and extended his operations as far as Tilbury in Essex.<sup>1</sup> Thus the three nations of Northumbria, Mercia, and East Saxony, embracing the greater part of England, and stretching from the Forth to the Thames, were converted to the Christian faith by missionaries from the Columban Church.

When Finan died, he was succeeded, in 660, by Colman, "who also," says Bede, "was sent out of Scotia," or Ireland.<sup>2</sup> As the same historian elsewhere states that he was sent from Iona, he may perhaps have gone first to Ireland in order to be there ordained a bishop, and thence proceeded to Northumbria.<sup>3</sup> A controversy about the observance of Easter, which had been going on for some time, now came to a crisis, and resulted in bringing to an end the Columban Church in Northumbria.

Though the celebration of the anniversary of Christ's Resurrection, however natural or justifiable as an outcome of Christian sentiment, is neither enjoined by scriptural precept nor sanctioned by apostolic example, yet its observance at the proper time had, through the growth of superstition, come to be regarded as a matter of supreme importance; and as various opinions prevailed as to what the proper time was, much disputation ensued ere the question was finally settled. It is necessary to give here a brief explanation of this somewhat intricate subject, which has already been incidentally referred to.

The Jews were commanded to kill the Paschal lamb on the evening of the fourteenth day of Nisan or Abib, the first month of their year, which was the month whose fourteenth day or full

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist.," iii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> While the word Scotia, at this period, always denoted Ireland, the people both of Ireland and British Dalriada were called Scots.

<sup>3</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist.," iii. 25; iv. 4.

moon fell first after the vernal equinox. The Eastern Church celebrated Easter on this day, the equivalent of the Jewish Passover, and claimed for their practice the authority of the apostle John. The Western Church, on the other hand, observed Easter on the day of Christ's Resurrection, that is, on the Sunday after the fourteenth day, and maintained that in so doing they followed St. Peter and St. Paul. In the year 325 the Council of Nice, while characterizing the Eastern custom as the Quartodeciman heresy, decided in favour of the Western usage. By this decision Easter was always to be kept on a Sunday, instead of being observed on a certain day of the month, which might not be a Sunday. In adjusting the lunar month to the solar year, and determining on what day of the month Easter would fall throughout a period of years, the Western Church adopted a cycle of eighty-four years. This was afterwards changed for a cycle of nineteen years. As 235 lunar months are nearly equal to nineteen years, it follows that at the end of a cycle of that duration the new moons again fall on the same days of the year, and eclipses recur in nearly the same order. It was further fixed that Easter should be kept not on the fourteenth, but on the fifteenth, or between the fifteenth and twenty-first day of the moon, since the Jewish day was reckoned from the evening of the fourteenth to the evening of the fifteenth day.<sup>1</sup>

The churches of Britain and Ireland, being ignorant of these changes by reason of the cessation of intercourse with the Continent after the termination of the Roman dominion in Britain, adhered to the older system. They thus celebrated Easter on the Sunday between the fourteenth and twentieth days, using a cycle of eighty-four years, while the Roman party kept it on the Sunday between the fifteenth and twenty-first days, of the moon, reckoned on a cycle of nineteen years; and the difference between the times of celebration sometimes amounted to a whole month.

The fact that the Irish Church differed from that of Rome in the observance of Easter was first brought to the knowledge of both Churches in the year 590, when intercourse between them was renewed, as has been already

<sup>1</sup> See Abbot Ceolfrid's Letter to King Nectan, Bede, "Eccl. Hist.," v. 21.

stated, by the arrival in Gaul of the Irish monk Columbanus.<sup>1</sup> It being found that he did not celebrate the festival on the same day as the Roman Church, he defended himself by pleading that he was only following the custom of his fathers. Augustine, having come to England seven years after this, soon learned that the Celtic Church of Britain committed the same irregularity. Pope Gregory had invested him with authority over the whole British clergy—the first assertion of Papal supremacy in this island.<sup>2</sup> The Roman monk soon attempted to exercise the authority thus conferred, and was stubbornly resisted. He summoned a conference of British bishops, and exhorted them to conform to the Catholic usage regarding Easter and other things; but in vain. He then, according to Bede, restored sight to a blind man, as a proof that his practice had the divine sanction. The Britons still refused to abandon their ancient customs. A second synod was held, with the same result. Augustine now foretold in a threatening manner, that if they would not comply with the Roman usage, they should be attacked and punished by their enemies. “Which,” says Bede, “fell out exactly as he had predicted.” For afterwards Ethelfrid, king of Northumbria, marched against the Britons, and 1200—or, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 200—monks from the monastery of Bangor, where there were said to be 2000 of them who all lived by the labour of their hands, having come to Chester, the scene of conflict, in order to pray for victory, were there cruelly slain. Some have suspected that it was Augustine himself who instigated this massacre; but, as he died before it occurred, we may entertain the hope that he was innocent of a crime so atrocious.<sup>3</sup>

In the year 605 Archbishop Laurence, the successor of Augustine, with his fellow-bishops, wrote to the bishops and abbots of Ireland entreating them to observe Easter at the proper time, and complaining that they followed the Britons in their errors. He had learned this from Columbanus in Gaul, and from Dagan, an Irish priest who had come to Britain, and who had refused to eat not only at the same table, but in the same house with him. The statement shows how much heat the controversy

<sup>1</sup> Bede, “Eccl. Hist.,” ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. i. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. ii. 2.

about Easter had generated. Bede tells us that even in his day it was the custom of the Britons "not to pay any respect to the faith and religion of the English, nor to correspond with them any more than with pagans." Archbishop Laurence also wrote a letter to the British priests for the purpose of inducing them to conform to Catholic practice, but with them and with their Irish brethren he was equally unsuccessful.<sup>1</sup>

Thirty years later the tide began to turn. In 634 Pope Honorius wrote to the "Scots," that is, the Irish, "earnestly exhorting them not to think their small number, placed in the utmost borders of the earth, wiser than all the ancient and modern churches of Christ throughout the world, and not to celebrate a different Easter."<sup>2</sup> Partial success rewarded the Papal zeal. The Scots inhabiting the south of Ireland began to observe Easter according to the Catholic usage. In the same year Abbot Segine of Iona received a letter from Cummian, who is believed to have been the abbot of the Columban monastery of Durrow in Ireland, in which he defended himself for having adopted the Roman custom. He had examined the question with aid from Scripture and works on history, and thus had become convinced that he had previously been in error. He had, moreover, been enjoined by an Irish Synod to conform to the universal practice. This synod had sent some of their number to Rome in quest of information. The deputies having there lodged with a Greek and a Hebrew, a Scythian and an Egyptian, found that these all kept Easter together in St. Peter's church, while they themselves differed from them by a whole month; and they had assured Cummian that the Roman Easter was celebrated throughout the entire world.<sup>3</sup>

A few years after this, the northern portion of the Irish Church, which still refused to change the time of keeping the festival, wrote a letter to Pope Severinus, requesting information on certain points connected with the question. After the death of Severinus their letter was answered by John, the Pope-elect. His reply was addressed to five bishops and as many priests by name, and to Saranus and the rest of the Scottish doctors or abbots. One of the priests named was Segine, Abbot of Iona, which shows that Iona and its dependent monasteries were

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Ecl. Hist.," ii. 4, 20. <sup>2</sup> Ibid. ii. 19. <sup>3</sup> See Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 160.



reckoned part of the Irish Church. The Papal epistle, though, according to Bede, it was "full of great authority and erudition for correcting the error" about Easter, failed to effect its purpose. In the north of Ireland and in Iona the old Easter was still kept.<sup>1</sup>

When Paulinus fled from York, he had left behind him James, his deacon, who continued long in the church of that place, and kept the Roman Easter along with as many as he could influence. There were thus two parties in Northumbria, a Catholic and a Columban, from the very commencement of Aidan's episcopate. Yet his humility and love of peace conciliated his opponents. "He was patiently tolerated by all men," says Bede, "and deservedly beloved even by those who differed in opinion concerning Easter."<sup>2</sup> When Finan succeeded Aidan, the controversy soon involved him in trouble. It was begun by some who, having come from Kent or France, affirmed that the Scots kept Easter Sunday contrary to the custom of the universal Church. "Among them," says Bede, "was Ronan, a Scot by nation, but instructed in ecclesiastical truth either in France or Italy, who, disputing with Finan, convinced many, or at least induced them to make a more strict inquiry after the truth; yet he could not prevail upon Finan, but, on the contrary, made him the more inveterate by reproof, and a professed opposer of the truth, being of a hot and violent temper." The royal family was a house divided against itself. Queen Eanfleda, who was a daughter of King Edwin, and had fled to Kent when he was slain, had there learned the Roman usage, and had brought with her to Northumbria a Kentish priest who also practised it. Thus it happened that Easter was twice kept in one year; and when the king had ended the time of fasting, and was keeping Easter, the queen and her followers were still fasting, and celebrating Palm Sunday. When Finan died and was succeeded by Colman, party feeling became still more intensified. While King Oswy kept the Scottish Easter, as he had been taught to do in Iona, his son Alfrid preferred the Roman usage, in which he had been instructed by his teacher. This was Wilfrid, a most learned man, who had been originally a monk of Lindisfarne, but had afterwards learned the ecclesi-

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Ecc. Hist." ii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. iii. 25.



astical doctrine at Rome and Lyons, and from the Archbishop of France had received the coronal tonsure. This was the tonsure used by the Roman clergy, which left on the head a circle of hair supposed to represent the Saviour's crown of thorns. It was held to have been derived from St. Peter; while the Scottish, or anterior tonsure, from ear to ear, was by the Romanists derisively termed the tonsure of Simon Magus. In 664 Agilbert, bishop of the West Saxons, a friend to Alfrid and Wilfrid, having come to Northumbria, it was agreed that in order to decide the controversy concerning Easter, the tonsure, and other matters, a synod should be held in the monastery of Streaneshalch, or the Bay of the Lighthouse, near Whitby, where the Abbess Hilda then presided. Thither came King Oswy and his son Alfrid. Agilbert with the priests Agatho and Wilfrid, James and Romanus, represented the Roman party. Colman with his clerics from Scotia, or Ireland, had on their side the Abbess Hilda and her followers, and also Bishop Cedd, who had long before been ordained by Finan, and now acted as interpreter for both parties.

King Oswy, having briefly spoken in praise of unity, commanded Colman, his bishop, to declare the nature and origin of the usage which he observed. When he had done so, the king required Agilbert to give a similar account of the Roman custom. This duty Agilbert devolved on Wilfrid. The arguments on both sides were fully set forth. Colman adduced the example of the apostle John, and the practice of his elders who had sent him thither. Wilfrid maintained that he followed the apostles Peter and Paul, and the custom of the universal Church, but that Colman agreed neither with John nor Peter, neither with the Law nor the Gospel. To this Colman rejoined, "Is it to be believed that our most reverend father Columba and his successors, men beloved of God, who kept Easter after the same manner, thought or acted contrary to the Divine writings? Whereas there were many among them, whose sanctity is testified by heavenly signs and the working of miracles, whose life, customs, and discipline I never cease to follow, not questioning their being saints in heaven." Wilfrid replied, "Concerning your father Columba and his followers, whose sanctity you say you imitate, and whose rules and pre-

cepts you observe, which have been confirmed by signs from heaven, I might answer, that when many on the day of judgment shall say to our Lord, 'That in his name they prophesied, and cast out devils, and wrought many wonders,' our Lord will reply that He never knew them. But far be it from me that I should say so of your fathers, because it is much more just to believe what is good than what is evil of persons whom one does not know. And if that Columba of yours—and, I may say, ours also, if he was Christ's servant—was a holy man and powerful in miracles, yet should he be preferred before the most blessed prince of the apostles, to whom our Lord said, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven?'"

"When Wilfrid had spoken thus, the king said, Is it true, Colman, that these words were spoken to Peter by our Lord? He answered, It is true, O king! Then says he, Can you show any such power given to your Columba? Colman answered, None. Then added the king, Do you both agree that these words were principally directed to Peter, and that the keys of heaven were given to him by our Lord? They both answered, We do. Then the king concluded, And I also say unto you, that he is the door-keeper, whom I will not contradict, but will, as far as I know and am able, in all things obey his decrees, lest, when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys. All present gave their assent, and renouncing the more imperfect institution, resolved to conform to that which they found to be better." Agilbert and Cedd now returned home, and the latter, forsaking the practices of the Scots, followed the Catholic observance of Easter. Colman, on the other hand, "perceiving that his doctrine was rejected, and his sect despised, took with him such as would not comply with the Catholic Easter and the tonsure—for there was much controversy about that also—and went back into Scotia, to consult with his people what was to be done in this case." Aidan having been bishop seventeen, Finan ten, and Colman three years, the Columban Church had existed in Northumbria for thirty years, when it was thus

brought to an end. Colman's successor in the see of Lindisfarne was Tuda, who had been ordained bishop among the southern Scots of Ireland, and therefore observed the Roman Easter and other rites.<sup>1</sup>

When Colman left Northumbria, King Oswy, by whom he was greatly loved, granted his request that a successor should also be appointed to preside over the monastery of Lindisfarne. Eata, who had been one of the twelve Anglic boys whom Aidan instructed, and who was now abbot of Melrose, was accordingly transferred to Lindisfarne, and appointed abbot of the brethren who remained there after the departure of the Scots. Having thus provided for the continuance of the good work, Colman, influenced by the superstitious reverence for the relics of the saints which was then prevalent, carried away with him part of Aidan's bones, and left the remainder in the church of Lindisfarne, ordering them to be interred in the sacristy. Then, taking along with him the Scots who adhered to him, and thirty Anglic monks, he repaired first to Iona, whence he had been sent to preach to the Northumbrians. Four years afterwards, he retired to a small island on the west coast of Ireland, called Inisbofinde, where he built a monastery, and placed in it the monks who had accompanied him thither.<sup>2</sup>

Though Bede abhorred Colman's opinions concerning Easter and other observances, he yet bears this honourable testimony to the excellence of his character, and of his work at Lindisfarne and in Northumbria:—"The place which he governed shows how frugal he and his predecessors were, for there were very few houses besides the church found at their departure; no more, indeed, than were barely sufficient for their daily residence. They had also no money, but cattle; for if they received any money from rich persons they immediately gave it to the poor, there being no need to gather money, or provide houses for entertainment of the great men of the world; for such never resorted to the church except to pray and hear

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "EccL Hist." iii. 25, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. iii. 26; iv. 4. Near to the church of Menmuir, which was dedicated to Aidan, is Colme's Well, which appears to be named after either Colman or Columba. The church of Tarbet, in Ross, was dedicated to Colman, but there were many saints who bore this name.

the Word of God. The king himself, when opportunity offered, came only with five or six servants, and, having performed his devotions in the church, departed. For this reason the religious habit was at that time held in great veneration; so that wheresoever any cleric or monk happened to come, he was joyfully received by all persons as God's servant. And if they chanced to meet him on the way, they ran to him, and, bowing, were glad to be signed with his hand or blessed with his mouth. Great attention was also paid to their exhortations; and on Sundays they flocked eagerly to the church, or the monasteries, not to feed their bodies, but to hear the Word of God. And if any priest happened to come into a village, the inhabitants flocked together to hear from him the Word of Life. For the priests and clerics went into the villages on no other account than to preach, baptize, visit the sick, and, in few words, to take care of souls. And they were so free from worldly avarice that none of them received land and possessions for building monasteries, unless they were compelled to do so by the temporal authorities."<sup>1</sup>

While, by the labours of Aidan, Finan, and Colman, the Christian Church was extended throughout the kingdom of Northumbria as a whole, the name of ST. CUDBERT or CUTHBERT is, in a more special sense, associated with that portion of it which lay between the Tweed and the Firth of Forth. "A Little Book of the Nativity of St. Cuthbert, extracted and translated from the Histories of the Irish," professes to relate his early life; though what amount of credit should be given to the story which it tells is uncertain. Of his later career other narratives have come down to us. Bede not only gives a brief account of him in his "Ecclesiastical History," and elsewhere celebrates his miracles in Latin verse, but has written his Life in a separate treatise. This work appears to be founded on an anonymous Life, which was evidently composed by a monk of Lindisfarne, and is still extant. Bede's Life is the most trustworthy, as his own boyhood was contemporary with the later years of Cuthbert, and he had ample sources of information concerning him. Like all similar works of the period, it abounds in miracles

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Ecc. Hist." iiii. 26.

said to have been performed either by Cuthbert or on his behalf, such being then considered indispensable incidents in the life of a saint.

The account which the Irish Life gives of Cuthbert's early history, if its palpable anachronisms and impossible occurrences are put aside, is the following:—His mother was the daughter of a king of Leinster, and his father was a king of Connaught who had carried her off as a captive, after slaying her father and all her family. Cuthbert was born in an Irish monastery, and baptized by the name of Mullucc. His mother afterwards takes him to Britain. Having landed in Galloway, they sail in another ship to Argyll. Afterwards they go to Iona, where they remain for some time. They next visit two brothers of Cuthbert's mother, named Meldanus and Eatanus, who are bishops in the province of the Scots, and who commit the boy to the care of a religious man in Lothian, while his mother, contrary to all probability, goes on a pilgrimage to Rome. A church called Childeschirche, now Channelkirk, in the valley of the Leader Water, is afterwards erected there in his honour.<sup>1</sup> At this period of Cuthbert's career the Irish Life ends, and Bede's begins.

Though the monk of Jarrow does not tell us where or when Cuthbert was born, or who were his parents, he states that after the saint had become prior of Melrose Abbey, and while preaching one day in a village, he entered the house of a pious woman who had nursed him in his infancy, and whom, on that account, he was accustomed to call his mother.<sup>2</sup> This incident seems to indicate as Cuthbert's native district the territory adjacent to Melrose, and so far is opposed to the story of his Irish birthplace and early life, which may nevertheless have some real foundation. It cannot, however, be determined with certainty whether he was of Irish or of Anglic extraction.

While still a young man, Cuthbert was on one occasion feeding his master's flocks "among the mountains near the river which is called Leader," and spending the night in vigils and prayers, as his custom was, when "on a sudden, his

<sup>1</sup> "Libellus de Nativitate Sancti Cuthberti," &c., chap. xix.

<sup>2</sup> Bede, "Life of St. Cuthbert," chap. xiv. ; Giles' edition of Bede's works, iv. 251.



companions being asleep, he saw a long stream of light break through the darkness of the night. In the midst of it a company of the heavenly host descended to the earth, and, having received among them a spirit of surpassing brightness, returned without delay to their heavenly home." A few days afterwards Cuthbert learned that Bishop Aidan of Lindisfarne had died at the very time of this vision, and forthwith he resolved to enter a monastery.<sup>1</sup> As Aidan's death occurred in the year 561, this event fixes the date at which Cuthbert became a monk. "He knew," says Bede, "that the Church of Lindisfarne contained many holy men, by whose teaching and example he might be instructed; but he was moved by the great reputation of Boisil, a monk and priest of surpassing merit, to choose for himself an abode in the Abbey of Melrose. And it happened by chance that when he had arrived there, and had leaped from his horse that he might enter the church to pray, he gave his horse and travelling spear to his servant, for he had not yet resigned the dress and habits of a layman. Boisil was standing before the doors of the monastery, and saw him first. He kindly received Cuthbert as he approached; and when he had heard the cause of his coming—namely, that he preferred the monastery to the world—he kept him near himself, for he was prior of that monastery. After a few days, when Eata, who was abbot of the monastery (no doubt the Eatanus mentioned in the Irish Life), had come, Boisil told him about Cuthbert, how that he was a young man of a promising disposition; and obtained permission that he should receive the tonsure, and be enrolled among the brethren. When he had thus entered the monastery, he conformed himself to the rules of the place with the same zeal as the others, and, indeed, sought to surpass them by observing stricter discipline; and in reading, working, watching, and praying he fairly outdid them all."<sup>2</sup>

Cuthbert remained ten years—that is, from 651 to 661—as a monk in Melrose. It was probably during this period that certain incidents in his history took place which are described in an appendix to the Irish Life.<sup>3</sup> He is there said to have dwelt in different parts of the country, and to

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Life of St. Cuthbert," chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. chap. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. chaps. xxvi. xxvii.

have led the life of a recluse at Dull, in Strathhtay. On the summit of a steep rock called Doilweme—now the Rock of Weem, near Dull—he erected a stone cross, built an oratory of wood, and made a bath out of a single stone, in which he used to immerse himself and spend the night in prayer. In the year 661, he accompanied Eata from Melrose to the newly founded monastery of Ripon, and was there appointed to the office of receiving guests. His stay at Ripon was brief, as King Alfrid soon after gave its monastery to Wilfrid, a zealot, as we have seen, for the Catholic Easter and other usages, because Abbot Eata and his monks preferred to quit the place rather than conform to these innovations on the Scottish customs.<sup>1</sup>

On the death of Boisil in 661, during the great plague which then prevailed, Cuthbert was appointed provost or prior of Melrose. In discharging the duties of this office, which he did for several years, “he not only furnished both precept and example to his brethren in the monastery, but sought to lead the minds of the neighbouring people to the love of heavenly things.” Finding that many of them lived in a manner inconsistent with their faith, and had recourse to charms and amulets for averting God’s anger, in order to correct their errors “he often went out from the monastery, sometimes on horseback, sometimes on foot, and preached the way of truth to the neighbouring villages, as Boisil, his predecessor, had done before him. He was mostly accustomed to travel through those places, and to preach in those villages which were situated far away among mountains, steep and wild and horrible to see, which by their poverty and rudeness hindered the approach of other teachers. Yet even here did his devoted mind find exercise for his powers of instruction; insomuch that he often remained a week, sometimes two or three, nay, even a whole month, without returning home; but, dwelling among the mountains, taught the poor people, both by the words of his preaching and by the example of his own conduct.”<sup>2</sup> Bede mentions a visit which Cuthbert paid to Ebba, head of the monastery at Coludi, or Coldingham, where he would set out when others were asleep, and spend the night in prayer,

<sup>1</sup> Bede, “Eccles. Hist.” v. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. “Life of St. Cuthbert,” chap. ix.

going into the sea till the water reached his neck and arms; which a brother of the monastery discovered by following him secretly. On another occasion he left the monastery, "and went by sea to the land of the Picts, which is called Niduari," or Galloway, accompanied by two of the brethren, on some necessary business. On their arrival they were overtaken by a storm, and exposed for several days to cold and hunger. But they found food on the shore where the saint had been accustomed to pray during night; and on the fourth day the storm was succeeded by a calm, and they returned home with a fair wind.<sup>1</sup> The name of Kirkcudbright is probably a memorial of this visit.

We have seen that when Colman quitted Northumbria, in consequence of King Oswy's rejection of the Scottish usages, Eata, who was then Abbot of Melrose, was selected to succeed him as Abbot of Lindisfarne. As Eata now presided over both monasteries, he appointed Cuthbert, in 664, to the office of prior in Lindisfarne, while he himself remained at Melrose. Both Eata and Cuthbert had now conformed to the Roman Easter and other rites; and the latter, on being transferred to Lindisfarne, endeavoured to induce the monks of that island to adopt the Catholic practice. Some of them were bitterly opposed to the abandonment of their ancient customs, but by patience and tact he at length converted them to his own views. His life in Lindisfarne was spent in continual austerity and devotion. "He was so zealous in watching and praying, that he was believed to have sometimes passed three or four nights together, during which he neither went to his own bed nor had any accommodation from the brethren for reposing himself. For he either passed the time alone, praying in some retired spot, or singing and making something with his hands, thus beguiling his sleepiness by labour; or, perhaps, he walked round the island, diligently examining everything therein, and by this exercise relieved the tediousness of psalmody and watching. So devout and zealous was he in his desire after heavenly things, that while officiating in the solemnity of the mass, he never could come to the conclusion of it without a profuse shedding of tears."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Life of St. Cuthbert," chaps. x. xi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. chap. xvi.

After Cuthbert had spent nine years as prior in the monastery of Lindisfarne, he resolved, with the approval of the abbot and brethren, to enter upon the life of an anchorite, which he had long and earnestly desired. The place which he chose for his solitary abode was on the rocky shore of the island, at some distance from the monastery. "But," says his biographer, "when he had for some time contended with the invisible adversary by prayer and fasting in this solitude, he then, aiming at higher things, sought out a more distant field of conflict, and more remote from the eyes of men." He, therefore, following Aidan's example, withdrew to the island of Farne, opposite Bamborough, and about two and a half miles from the coast. Here he constructed for himself an abode, of which Bede gives the following description:—"The building was almost of a round form, from wall to wall about four or five perches in extent. The wall was, on the outside, higher than a man, but within, by excavating the rock, he made it much deeper, to prevent the eyes and thoughts from wandering, that the mind might be wholly bent on heavenly things, and the pious inhabitant might behold nothing from his residence but heaven, to which he so ardently aspired. The wall was constructed, not of hewn stones, nor of brick and mortar, but of rough stones and turf, which had been taken out from the ground within. Some of them were so large that four men could hardly have lifted them; but Cuthbert himself, with angelic help, had raised and placed them on the wall. There were two chambers in the house—one an oratory, the other for domestic purposes. He finished the walls of them by digging round, and cutting away the natural soil within and without; and he formed the roof out of rough poles and straw. Moreover, at the landing-place of the island he built a large house, in which the brethren who visited him might be received and rest themselves; and not far from it there was a fountain of water for their use." He then, with the help of the brethren, dug out a well in the middle of his hut, which supplied water for his own wants. He also procured implements of husbandry, and raised a crop of barley. He now began to live in a more secluded manner. At first when the brethren came to visit him, he would leave



his cell and minister to them. But he proceeded to practise greater self-mortification; and, by neglecting the laws of health, brought on bodily ailments. At length he shut himself up in his cell, and would only communicate with visitors through a window. Many persons, attracted by the fame of his devotion, came to him from distant places for spiritual advice or consolation, and to none were these refused."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile important events had taken place in the Church of Northumbria. Alfrid, king of Deira, had previously sent Wilfrid to Gaul to be consecrated bishop over him and his people. It is said that he resorted to this expedient because Wilfrid objected to his being ordained by the Scottish bishops, as they were not in communion with the Roman Church. During his absence, Ceadda, or Chad, had been sent by King Oswy to Kent, to be ordained bishop of the Church of York. Finding, on his arrival in Kent, that the see of Canterbury was vacant in consequence of the death of the archbishop, he was consecrated in the year 665 by Wini, bishop of the West Saxons, assisted by two British bishops who had conformed to the Roman observance of Easter. Such ordination was afterwards pronounced invalid by Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, "who completed it," says Bede, "after the Catholic manner." Chad had been one of Aidan's disciples, and he now followed his example by travelling everywhere on foot, and diligently preaching the Gospel. Wilfrid, having returned from Gaul fired with still greater zeal for Roman observances, brought many innovations into the Church. "Whence it followed," as Bede informs us, "that the Catholic institutions daily gained strength; and all the Scots who dwelt among the Angles either conformed to these, or returned into their own country."<sup>2</sup> Chad was now sent to be bishop of the Mercians, in order to make room for Wilfrid's appointment as bishop of York. This diocese included not only Northumbria, but Cumbria or Strathclyde, Dalriada, and the territory of the Southern Picts, all of which King Oswy had brought under his dominion.

In the administration of his extensive diocese Wilfrid was

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Life of St. Cuthbert," chaps. xvii. xviii; "Ecc. Hist." iv. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. "Ecc. Hist." iii. 28.



not wanting in zeal. Under him, we are told, "the churches were multiplied both in the south among the Saxons, and in the north among the Britons, Scots, and Picts; Wilfrid having ordained everywhere presbyters and deacons, and governed new churches."<sup>1</sup> As the head of the Roman party, his influence could not fail to be injurious to the Columban Church in Scotland, of whose ancient usages he was the determined opponent. In the year 678, in consequence of a dissension which had broken out between King Egfrid, the son and successor of Oswy, and Wilfrid, the latter was driven from his see, and two bishops were substituted for him. Bosa was placed over Deira, having his see in York; and Eata over Bernicia, with his see in Lindisfarne or in Hagulstad—now now called Hexham—where Wilfrid had founded a monastery; both places having been promoted to the episcopal dignity from a society of monks. Three years after Wilfrid's expulsion, Archbishop Theodore appointed two additional bishops, the diocese being thus further subdivided. While Eata still remained in Lindisfarne, Tunbert was placed in the church of Hexham, and Trumwine in the province of the Southern Picts, who were then subject to the Angles. The seat of Trumwine's bishopric was at Aebbercurnig or Abercorn, where a monastery had been founded, probably during Wilfrid's episcopate.<sup>2</sup>

When Cuthbert had lived eight years of solitude in Farne Island, a great synod which met in 684 at Twyford, near the river Alne, and at which King Egfrid was present and Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury presided, unanimously chose him to succeed Tunbert, who had been deposed from the bishopric of Hexham. For some time, however, they could not persuade Cuthbert to leave his monastery and accept the office of bishop. At length the king, Trumwine, and other religious and great men, along with many of the monks of Lindisfarne, crossed over to the island, and on their knees besought him to quit his retirement. He consented, though with tears, says Bede, and accompanied them to the synod. At the following Easter he was consecrated at York in presence of King Egfrid; seven bishops meeting on the

<sup>1</sup> Eddi's "Life of St. Wilfrid," 21, quoted by Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist.," iv. 3, 12.

occasion, one of whom was Theodore the primate. But as Cuthbert preferred to be placed over the church of Lindisfarne, it was agreed that Eata should return to the see of Hexham, to which he had at first been ordained, and that Cuthbert should take upon him the government of that of Lindisfarne. In the same year, according to Bede, Egfrid sent Beret, his general, to invade Ireland, which he miserably ravaged, not even sparing churches or monasteries. Very soon after Cuthbert's consecration as bishop, and much against his advice, the same monarch led an army against the Picts, and was slain with the greater part of his forces at Dunnichen, in Forfarshire, on the 20th day of May, 685. Another battle similar to this in its results as well as in some of its circumstances was to be fought after an interval of 629 years on the field of Bannockburn. In consequence of the defeat and death of Egfrid, Trumwine fled from his diocese, accompanied by the monks of his monastery of Abercorn. "From that time," says Bede, "the hopes and strength of the Anglie kingdom began to fluctuate and retrograde, for the Picts recovered their own lands, which had been held by the Angles; and the Scots who were in Britain and some of the Britons regained their liberty, which they have now enjoyed for about forty-six years." The dominion of the Angles over the Picts, Scots, and Strathclyde Britons was thus brought to an end, when it had lasted for thirty years.<sup>1</sup>

After Cuthbert had spent two years in the government of his diocese, feeling that his death was drawing near, he resolved to resign his bishopric, and return to his solitude in Farne Island, in order to prepare for his departure from this world. But he first wished to make an inspection of his diocese, and visit the houses of the faithful in his neighbourhood. When this work was accomplished, he withdrew, immediately after Christmas in the year 686, to his dwelling on the island. A crowd of monks were standing by as he entered the ship, and one of them, who was old and venerable, said to him, "Tell us, my lord bishop, when we may hope for your return." To this he replied, "When you shall bring my body back here." When he had passed about two months in the enjoyment of rest, and in the practice of his usual austerity, he was suddenly

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist.," iv. 26, 28.

seized with illness. His attendant Herefrid, who was at that time abbot of Lindisfarne, related to Bede, his biographer, the circumstances connected with his death.

Three weeks of continued suffering had greatly weakened him. When Herefrid visited him on the first morning after his illness began, he came to the window, and, in reply to his inquiry about his health, told him that indisposition had come upon him the previous night. But Herefrid, thinking he referred to an old complaint which troubled him almost daily, and without making any more inquiries, said to him, "Give us your blessing, for it is time to put to sea and return home." "Do so," he replied, "go on board, and return home in safety. But when the Lord shall have taken my spirit, bury me in this house, near my oratory, towards the south, opposite the eastern side of the holy cross, which I have erected there. Towards the north side of that same oratory is a stone coffin, concealed by turf, which the venerable abbot Cudda formerly gave me. You will place my body therein, wrapping it in linen which you will find in it. I would not wear it while I was alive; but for the love of that highly favoured woman who sent it to me, the Abbess Verca, I have preserved it to wrap my corpse in." Herefrid then left the island, as Cuthbert had commanded; and, having assembled the brethren in the church of Lindisfarne, had prayers offered up for him without intermission. Stormy weather prevented his return to Farne for five days. At length there was a calm, and having proceeded to the island, he found that the saint had left his cell, and was sitting in the house he had constructed for his visitors, so as to meet any one who might come to see him, and who thus might not have to go further. He had been sitting there five days and nights without moving, with no other food than five onions, of only one of which he had but eaten a part. He now consented that some of the brethren should remain and attend upon him.

Returning to Lindisfarne, Herefrid informed the monks of Cuthbert's order that he should be buried in his own island, and they agreed with his opinion that they should ask his consent to the removal of his body to their monastery, and its interment in the church with the usual honours. Coming

again to Cuthbert, Herefrid acquainted him with their wishes, to which he replied: "It was my desire to rest in the body here, where I have done my little wrestling, such as it has been, for the Lord, where, too, I wish to finish my course, and whence I hope to be raised up by the merciful Judge to a crown of righteousness. But I think it better for you also that I should rest here, on account of the fugitives and evil-doers who may flee to my corpse for refuge; because, whatsoever I am, the report will go abroad concerning me that I am a servant of Christ, and you will of necessity have very often to intercede for such with the secular rulers, and so to undergo much labour on account of the presence of my body." But when they had further urged their request, he said, "Since you wish to overcome my scruples, and to carry away my body from this place, it seems to me the best way that you should bury it inside your church, so that you may be able to visit my tomb whenever you please, and have it in your power to admit or exclude those who come hither." On their bended knees the monks thanked him for his permission and counsel; and, returning home, from that time onwards made frequent visits to him.

When Cuthbert saw from his increasing faintness that his end was near, he ordered that he should be taken back to his cell and oratory. They accordingly carried him thither, as he was too feeble to walk. When they reached the door, they begged him to allow one of them to enter with him and wait upon him, for no one had for many years entered his cell but himself. To this he consented. It was the third hour of the day, and Walstod, a sick brother whom Cuthbert himself had fixed upon, stayed till the ninth hour, and then came out and informed Herefrid of the bishop's desire to see him. Herefrid therefore went in, and found him reclining in a corner of his oratory opposite the altar. When he earnestly asked him to leave some words as a bequest and last farewell to the brethren, "he began to speak a few but powerful words concerning peace and humility, and warned us against those who chose rather to oppose such things than to take delight in them. 'Preserve peace,' he said, 'always among yourselves and divine charity; and when necessity requires you to deliberate on your con-



dition, see that you be very careful to be of one mind in your counsels. Have mutual concord also with other servants of Christ, and despise not the household of the faith who come to you craving hospitality, but be careful to receive such persons, to entertain them, and to speed them on their way familiarly and kindly; and by no means think you are better than those who are sharers of the same faith and conduct. But with those who err from the unity of Catholic peace, either by keeping Easter at an improper time, or by a perverse life, have no communion.' He then remained quiet till evening, and tranquilly spent the night also in watchfulness and prayer. When the usual time of nocturnal prayers was come, having received from me the blessed sacraments, and thus strengthened himself for his departure, which he now knew to be at hand, by the communion of the body and blood of the Lord; and, having lifted up his eyes to heaven, and extended his hands aloft, his soul, intent upon heavenly praises, departed to the joys of the heavenly kingdom." His death took place on the 20th of March in the year 687, when he had attained to an advanced age. 'The precise length of his life is not known.'<sup>1</sup>

Such is the simple but impressive account of Cuthbert's death, as given by an eye-witness, who goes on to relate how it was made known to the monks. "I immediately went out," he says, "and announced the death to the brethren, who had themselves also been passing the night in watching and prayer; and it happened that at that moment they were singing, in the order of the nocturnal lauds, the fifty-ninth (in our Version the sixtieth) Psalm; and immediately one of them ran and lighted two candles, and, holding one in each hand, he ascended to a higher spot, to show to the brethren who were in the monastery of Lindisfarne that the holy soul had now departed to the Lord; for such was the signal agreed upon among themselves to announce his death. And when the brother who had been intently watching for an hour afar off, on the opposite watch-tower of the island of Lindisfarne, saw the signal, he ran quickly to the church where the whole congregation of the brethren were assembled to celebrate the solemnities of the nocturnal psalmody; and it happened that they also, at

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Life of St. Cuthbert," xxxvii.-xxxix.; "Eccl. Hist.," iv. 29.



the moment of his entrance, were singing the foresaid psalm. The body of the venerable father was placed on board a ship, and carried to the island of Lindisfarne, where it was met by a great crowd of persons and a choir of singers, and deposited in a stone coffin in the church of the blessed apostle Peter on the right side of the altar.”<sup>1</sup>

Cuthbert's bones were not allowed to remain long undisturbed. According to the superstitious notions of the time, it was thought necessary that Lindisfarne should have the honour of possessing, for the veneration of the people, a patron-saint as well as the other Saxon sees. In ordinary circumstances the saint selected for this dignity would have been Aidan, the founder of the bishopric; but as he adhered to the Scottish observance of Easter, he was reckoned heterodox by the Catholic party. Cuthbert had conformed, and doubtless for this reason it was resolved to have his relics enshrined, according to the custom which was then coming into use. His body was therefore raised, eleven years after his death, and was found, Bede asserts, quite entire, as if he were not dead, but sleeping. It was now wrapped in fresh garments, and placed in a new coffin or shrine. This was deposited on the same spot, but above the pavement of the church, to excite the reverence of the devout.<sup>2</sup> Its subsequent history was remarkable. In 875 Lindisfarne was ravaged by the Danes, and the monks fled, bearing on their shoulders the precious shrine. We cannot here relate its many weary wanderings on both sides of the Tweed. Suffice it to state that in the year 995 it found at length a resting-place in Durham cathedral. At the Reformation it was buried under the pavement. In 1827 the grave was opened, and the skeleton was found entire, wrapped in silken robes, and inclosed within three coffins, the innermost of which was believed to be the identical one in which the saint had been buried in the church of Lindisfarne in 698, when his body was first raised from the grave.

Whatever would now be thought of Cuthbert's asceticism, it cannot be doubted that the extraordinary extent to which he carried this practice powerfully impressed the popular mind

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Life of St. Cuthbert," xl.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. xlii.

of that age, and formed no small part of his fame. But with this doubtful virtue he united fervent piety and genuine humility of character. He was, moreover, zealous and laborious in preaching to the people, and we have the testimony of Bede that in this work he showed much oratorical skill. While he strikingly resembled Columba in the circumstances attending his death, as well as in many features of his work, he appears not to have possessed that apostle's love of learning. This, however, may be accounted for by his less fortunate position in early life, and the mature age at which the Lammermoor shepherd resolved to enter a monastery. Yet he diffused the light of the Gospel throughout a large portion of Scottish as well as of English territory, and has been justly honoured as one of the most distinguished of our early evangelists. Twenty-three churches dedicated to him have been enumerated, a clear proof of the veneration in which he was held in many districts of our country.<sup>1</sup>

A year after Cuthbert's death, Eadbert was ordained his successor. As the diocese of Lindisfarne extended to the Firth of Forth, it included a monastery at Tynningham in East Lothian, which was founded, some time after Cuthbert's episcopate, by Balthere or Baldred. This was an anchorite, who appears to have had his abode on the Bass Rock—another instance of the island hermitages, which, though less numerous on the East coast than in the Hebrides, where there were so many more islands, were nevertheless placed on most of those situated in the Firth of Forth. The death of Baldred of the Bass, as he was commonly called, is recorded under the year 756 by Simeon of Durham, who says that it occurred in Tynninghame. Bower, the continuator of Fordun, states that St. Baldred was the disciple, and also the suffragan of Kentigern. This statement is, however, erroneous, as Kentigern's death took place nearly a century and a half before that of Baldred. According to the Aberdeen Breviary, the latter taught the Christian faith in the churches of Aldhame, Tynninghame, and Preston; and died in the house of the parish priest of Aldhame. Bower records a tradition—and a similar account is given in the Breviary—that when the parishioners of these

<sup>1</sup> Forbes' "Kalendars," *sub voce*.

three places contended for the possession of the body of the saint, and took arms to decide the contest, they were all overcome on the following night with sleep, and, on awaking, found three bodies in every respect alike, one of which was carried off and buried in each of the three churches. Of other saints also there exists a similar legend. St. Baldred's cave is shown on the coast near Aldhame; his church of Tynninghame possessed the right of sanctuary; and a well beside Preston kirk still bears his name.<sup>1</sup>

After the battle of Dunnichen, which resulted, as we have seen, in the Britons of Strathclyde regaining their freedom, the name of Sedulius occurs as that of their bishop.<sup>2</sup> Bede informs us that they were induced to adopt the Catholic observance of Easter through the influence of Adamnan, abbot of Iona, who, we shall find, had gone over to the Roman party. Bede's statement is confirmed by the presence of Sedulius at a council held in Rome in the year 721. The Angles, though they had lost Strathclyde, as well as the territories of the Picts and Scots, still held possession of Galloway, along with the district stretching southwards from the Solway to the river Derwent; and they appear to have now revived the bishopric of Candida Casa, or Whitherne, in consequence of an influx of Angles into the district. Pecthelm was their first bishop, and is mentioned by Bede as filling the see in the year 731.<sup>3</sup> He had four successors. After the bishopric had been maintained for upwards of sixty years, it was brought to an end by the ravages of the Scots and Picts.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Bower's edition of "Fordun's Scotichronicon," vol. i., 134 (1759); "Brev. Aberd." *pars hyemalis*, fol. lxiii., lxiv; Forbes' "Kalendars," 274.

<sup>2</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," &c. ii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Eccl. Hist.," v. 23.

<sup>4</sup> William of Malmesbury, "Gest. Pontif. Ang." iii. 118 (quoted by Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 225).



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CELTIC CHURCH DURING THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CENTURIES.

Abbots of Iona—Maelrubha founds Applecross—Congan, Kentigerna, and Fillan—Nathalan—Adamnan—He adopts the Roman Easter—Schism in Iona—King Nectan adopts the Roman usages—He expels the Columban clergy from Pictland—Boniface—Fergus—Serf—Culdee Monastery of Lochleven—Culdee Controversy—Culdees of Glasgow—Of Dunkeld—Modan and Ronan—Termination of Schism in Iona.

WE now return to the parent monastery of Iona. It was during Segine's tenure of its abbacy that the Columban Church had been extended, as we have seen, into Northumbria, and a portion of the Irish Church had conformed to the Roman usages. He died in 652, the year after the death of Aidan and the appointment of Finan as his successor in Lindisfarne. Of Suibhne, the next abbot of Iona, scarcely anything is known. He held the office only five years, having died in 657. He was succeeded by Cummene Ailbhe, or the Fair, nephew of Abbot Segine.<sup>1</sup> His tenure of office was marked by two important events already described—the conquest of the Britons of Strathclyde, the Scots of Dalriada, and the Southern Picts, by Oswy, king of Northumbria, and the termination of the Columban Church in the Anglie kingdom by the departure of Colman. It was probably the disparagement of the character of Columba implied in the adverse decision of the Council of Streanashalch, or Whitby, which induced Abbot Cummene to write the Life of his distinguished patron. Coincident with Cummene's death, which took place in the year 669, was that of St. Itharnan or Ethernan, of Madderdyn or Madderty in Strathearn, and of St. Corindu or Caran, of Fetteresso in the Mearns. The former of these ecclesiastics is said to have been a Scot of Alban, and to have gone for his education to Ireland. He was commemorated at Brechin and other places.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, cxlviii.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes' "Kalendars," 297, 332.

Cummene's successor was Failbhe. During his tenure of the abbacy, which lasted ten years, the monastery of Aporcrosan (now Applecross), in Ross-shire, was founded by St. Maelrubha, the great evangelist of the North-west Highlands. According to Dr. Reeves there is, next to Columba, no ecclesiastic of the ancient Scottish Church whose commemorations are more numerous in the West of Scotland than St. Maelrubha's, or whose history is marked with greater exactness in its main particulars. He was born on the 3rd of January, 642. On his father's side he was eighth in descent from Niall of the Nine Hostages, sovereign of Ireland. On his mother's side he was kin to St. Comgall of Bangor, who was of the Cruithnigh, or Irish Picts of Dalaradia. In his youth he entered the monastery of Bangor. In 671, when he was twenty-nine years old, he departed to Alba, following in this the example of Columba and so many others of his countrymen. Two years elapsed ere he obtained a permanent settlement, but in 673 he founded the church and monastery of Aporcrosan. Here he exercised the office of abbot for fifty-one years, and here he died on the 21st of April, 722, at the age of eighty. He also founded a church on an island in a lake of Ross-shire, which from him derives its name of Loch Marec. He was venerated throughout the district extending from Loch Carron to Loch Broom, as well as in other places both in the islands and on the mainland. His monastery at Aporcrosan does not appear to have been connected with the Columban Church, except in so far as a common purpose and a similar Irish origin united them. It was affiliated to that of Bangor, from which he came. Mention is made of the death, in the year 802, of an abbot of Bangor who took his designation from Aporcrosan; and Dr. Reeves thinks it probable that Failbhe, abbot of Aporcrosan, who was lost at sea with twenty-two members of the fraternity, was then on his way to or from a chapter of his Order in the monastery of Bangor. Scottish writers state that Maelrubha was martyred by the Danes or Norwegians at Urquhard, now Ferintosh; but this is not confirmed by any ancient document, and is besides open to the objection that there is no record of any invasion by the Northmen at so early a period. According to the Aberdeen Breviary, the lands of Applecross in after-times, in a radius of



six miles from the church, enjoyed the privilege of sanctuary. This may be true, but in placing the saint's festival at the 27th of August, instead of the 21st of April, the Breviary probably confounds him with St. Ruphus of Capua, who was commemorated on the former of these days. The name of St. Maelrubha has undergone many and strange transformations, such as Molroy, Marrow, Maree, Ru, Summereve, and others. Dr. Reeves enumerates twenty-one places where this evangelist was commemorated.<sup>1</sup>

About the same period occurs the name of St. Congan, who, with his sister Kentigerna and her son Fillan, came from Ireland, where he is said to have been a petty king, and to have been compelled by his enemies to fly. The chief scene of his labours was the district of Lochalsh. To him also there were many dedications. Kentigerna became a recluse in Inch Cailleach in Loch Lomond. From Fillan was derived the name of Strathfillan, where he founded a monastery. His arm-bone played an important part at the battle of Bannockburn; and his "coygerach," or pastoral staff, and his bell—or what are believed to be such—are still preserved.<sup>2</sup> Fillan of Lochearn was a different saint, and lived, as we have seen, about the beginning of the sixth century. Abbot Failbhe of Iona died in 679, and in the same year is recorded the death of St. Neachtan Neir, Nathalan, or Nachlan, who is said to have been born in Aberdeenshire. He distributed all his grain, and whatever other property he possessed, to the poor during a famine; and built the churches of Tullicht, Bothelim, and Colle at his own expense.<sup>3</sup>

Abbot Failbhe was succeeded by Adamnan, the most distinguished of those who held the office after the great founder. His name was frequently written Adomnan, but as the word is said to be an Irish diminutive of Adam, Adamnan appears to be its more correct form. A native of the county of Donegal, he was born in 624—twenty-seven years after Columba's death—and was thus fifty-five years of age when he was elected to the abbacy. He was seventh in descent from Conall

<sup>1</sup> See "Saint Maelrubha; his History and Churches," by William Reeves, D.D., who first investigated the life of this saint (*Proceed. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, iii. 258–296).

<sup>2</sup> Forbes' "Kalendars," 310, 341, 373; Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, clviii. 336.

<sup>3</sup> Forbes' "Kalendars," 417.

Gulban, and therefore could claim kindred with Columba, as well as with many of the sovereigns of Ireland. He entered the monastery of Iona probably during the abbacy of Segine. In addition to his skill in the Latin language, he appears to have possessed a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek; and he was thoroughly versed in the literature of his native country. In 686, the year following the defeat and death of Egfrid, king of Northumbria, in his war with the Picts of Scotland, Adamnan, now abbot of Iona, visited Alfrid his successor, with whom he had become intimately acquainted when that prince was in early life an exile in Ireland, where he was known by the name of Flann Fina. The purpose of Adamnan's undertaking a journey to Northumbria was probably to procure the release of the captives whom King Egfrid's general had carried off from Ireland during his invasion of that country. The part of the coast where Adamnan landed is thus described in his *Irish Life*:—"The strand is long, and the flood rapid; so rapid that if the best steed in Saxonland, ridden by the best horseman, were to start from the edge of the tide when the tide begins to flow, he could only bring his rider ashore by swimming, so extensive is the strand, and so impetuous is the tide." The Solway Firth seems to be here referred to. Landing on its southern shore, Adamnan would travel thence to Northumbria. He was successful in obtaining the release of sixty captives, whom he brought back to Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after this we find Adamnan sending twelve vessels to the mouth of the river Seil in Lorne, to fetch oak trees required for the repair of the monastery of Iona. Probably about the same time, Arculf, a bishop of Gaul, who had gone to Jerusalem to visit the holy places, and, after he had seen Palestine, Damascus, Constantinople, Alexandria, and many islands, was, while returning home by sea, driven upon the western coast of Britain, and came to Adamnan in Iona. His host kindly entertained him, and committed to writing all that he told him concerning the Holy Places. He afterwards presented to King Alfrid the work thus composed. The book has come down to us, and Bede gives several extracts from it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, cxlix.-clii.

Bede, "Ecc. Hist." v. 15; Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, clxi, clxiv.

In 688, two years after Adamnan's first journey to King Alfrid, he made a second visit to that monarch, probably for the purpose of arranging some political matter affecting both countries, the nature of which has not been recorded. This visit led to important results, which Bede thus describes:—"Adamnan, priest and abbot of the monks that were in the isle of Hii, was sent ambassador by his nation to Alfrid, king of the Angles, where, having made some stay, he observed the canonical rites of the Church, and was earnestly admonished by many, who were more learned than himself, not to presume to live contrary to the universal custom of the Church, in relation either to the observance of Easter or to any other decrees whatsoever, considering the small number of his followers, seated in so distant a corner of the world. In consequence of this he changed his mind, and readily preferred those things which he had seen and heard in the churches of the Angles to the customs which he and his people had hitherto followed. For he was a good and wise man, and pre-eminently well instructed in the knowledge of the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup> We learn also from a letter which Ceolfrid, abbot of Jarrow, sent to Nectan, or, as he calls him, Naiton, king of the Picts, that "Adamnan, the abbot and renowned priest of the Columbans," came to see his monastery; and that by the arguments with which Ceolfrid plied him—which are stated in his letter, as well as Adamnan's answers—and also by what the latter saw of the rules of the Northumbrian churches, he was brought to allow their superiority. "When he had returned home," continues Bede, "he endeavoured to bring his own people that were in Hii, or who were subject to that monastery, into the way of truth, which he himself had learned and embraced with all his heart, but in this he could not prevail." This is confirmed by Ceolfrid's letter to Naiton, in which it is stated that Adamnan, "returning to Scotia (or Ireland) afterwards by his preaching brought great numbers of that nation over to the Catholic observance of the Paschal time; though he was not yet able to gain the consent of the monks that lived in the island of Hii, over whom he presided. He would also," he adds, "have been mindful to amend the tonsure if his authority had extended so far."<sup>2</sup> The monks of Iona, as

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Ecl. Hist." v. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. v. 15, 21.

well as those of other Columban monasteries, were thus not yet prepared to adopt the new opinions of their abbot. As Adamnan states in the preface to his *Life of Columba*, that he wrote that work in compliance with the urgent requests of his brethren, and as he makes no mention in it of any disagreement between them and himself concerning the observance of Easter, though he refers to the discord which had arisen on the subject in Ireland, we may conclude that the *Life* was composed ere this question had arisen between him and his monks.

In 692 Adamnan again went to Ireland, but the object of his visit does not clearly appear. In the following year he is mentioned as being in Iona on the occasion of the interment there of Bruide, the son of Bile, the Pictish king, in whose reign the great victory over the Angles had been gained at Dunnichen.<sup>1</sup> In 697 Adamnan again visited Ireland, when, at his instance, a synod was held at Tara, which was attended by the son of the supreme monarch of Ireland, forty-seven chiefs, and thirty-nine ecclesiastics. Brude, the son of Derile, and king of the Picts of Scotland, was also present. The purpose of the synod was to procure the exemption of women from military expeditions; for before that time men and women in Ireland went equally to battle. A legend states that Adamnan's mother, having seen a woman perpetrate a deed of inhuman cruelty on another woman in battle, sat down and said to her son, "Thou shalt not take me from this spot until thou exemptest women for ever from excursions and hostings."<sup>2</sup> Adamnan promised to carry out his mother's wishes, and at the synod procured the passing of a law, called the "Law of the Innocents," freeing women from this duty. Other acts of the synod were called the "Law of Adamnan," from which may be inferred the great extent of his influence in his native country.<sup>3</sup>

It was probably during this visit that he succeeded, as Bede informs us, in inducing many of the Irish people to conform to the Catholic observance of Easter. But he could not prevail with the brethren of the Irish monasteries which were dependent on Iona to abandon their ancient customs. "Returning to his island," says Bede, "after having celebrated the canonical

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, cliv; "Chron. Picts and Scots," 408.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. clv clvi.



Easter in Ireland, he most earnestly inculcated the observance of the Catholic time of Easter in his monastery, yet without being able to prevail; and it so happened that he departed this life before the next year came round; the Divine goodness so ordaining it that, as he was a great lover of peace and unity, he should be taken away to everlasting life before he should be obliged, on the return of the time of Easter, to quarrel still more seriously with those that would not follow him in the truth."<sup>1</sup> Adamnan died in Iona, on the 23rd of September, 704. He thus appears to have remained in Ireland about seven years previous to the year of his death; and we may well believe that this period was mainly spent in the work of converting the Irish to the Catholic observance of Easter. So great a revolution amongst a people wedded to ancient usages could hardly have been brought about so quickly as the statement of Bede implies.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Reeves enumerates ten places in Ireland, and nine in Scotland, where Adamnan is commemorated. In both countries several of the dedications to Columba and to him are found in close proximity. Thus in Scotland Forglen is dedicated to Adamnan, and here was formerly kept Columba's sacred banner, called the Breacbannach; Columba's church of Belhelvy is adjacent to Adamnan's church of Furvy; and Inchcolm, or Columba's Isle, in the Firth of Forth, is near Inchkeith, in which, according to Bower, "St. Adamnan presided as abbot."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, it is probable that Adamnan, in founding his churches, had some connection with St. Congan and his relatives. This appears from the proximity of their dedications. Forglen and St. Congan's church of Turriff were only separated by the river Doveran. St. Fillan is commemorated in Pittenweem, not far distant from Inchkeith. Strathfillan, with its monastery founded by the same saint, was close to the extensive territory which belonged to the monastery of Dull, founded by Adamnan, and the most important of all his churches.<sup>4</sup> Adamnan's name underwent many changes; and were it not that these can be satisfactorily explained by phonetic laws, it would scarcely be recognized under such forms as Eunan, Eonan, and Theunan.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist." v. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, clviii. clxx.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. clxiv.-clxix. <sup>4</sup> Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 175. <sup>5</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, 1874, clxx.



Adamnan's successor was Conmael, who was the first abbot of Iona not descended from Conall Gulban, and therefore not of Columba's kindred. Three years after his election, and while he was still alive, Duncadh, who belonged to the tribe of the founder, was also appointed abbot. It thus appears probable that Adamnan's adoption of the Roman usages had produced a schism in Iona, and that two parties now existed, each of which elected its own abbot, while they observed Easter at different times. Though the Scottish Easter was discontinued, as we shall see, soon after this, yet other distinctive features of the Columban system were probably still retained by the conservative, and relinquished by the Roman party, since the schism continued for sixty-five years. During this period each party, as it got the upper hand, appointed a rival abbot; and though there were intervals during which only one abbot held the office, yet of these sixty-five years forty-five were marked by the existence of two abbots at the same time.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the new opinions were gaining ground elsewhere. In the year 710, Nectan, the Pictish king, "taught," as Bede informs us, "by frequent meditation on the ecclesiastical writings, renounced the error which he and his nation had till then been under in relation to the observance of Easter, and submitted, together with his people, to celebrate the Catholic time of our Lord's resurrection." As Nectan knew that the Angles followed the Roman Church, he sent messengers to Ceolfrid, abbot of the monastery of Jarrow, "desiring that he would write him a letter containing arguments, by the help of which he might the better confute those that presumed to keep Easter out of due time; as also concerning the form and manner of tonsure for distinguishing the clergy; not to mention that he himself possessed much information in these particulars. He also prayed to have architects sent to him to build a church in his nation after the Roman manner, promising to dedicate the same in honour of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles." Abbot Ceolfrid accordingly sent the architects, and also such a letter as the king desired. The letter, which is given in Bede's History, is long and interesting, and contains the report of the

<sup>1</sup> Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 176, 288.

conversation, already referred to, which the writer had with Adamnan concerning Easter. When it had been read and interpreted to Nectan and his most learned men, he was greatly delighted with it, and, rising from among his courtiers who sat around him,<sup>1</sup> "he knelt on the ground, giving thanks to God that he had been found worthy to receive such a present from the land of the Angles; and, said he, I knew indeed before that this was the true celebration of Easter, but now I so fully know the reason for the observance of this time, that I seem convinced that I knew little of it before. Therefore I publicly declare and protest to you that are here present, that I will for ever continually observe this time of Easter with all my nation; and I do decree that this tonsure, which we have heard is most reasonable, shall be received by all the clergy in my kingdom. Accordingly he immediately performed by his regal authority what he had said. For the cycles of nineteen years were forthwith, by public command, sent throughout all the provinces of the Picts, to be transcribed, learned, and observed; the erroneous revolutions of eighty-four years being everywhere suppressed. All the ministers of the altar and monks adopted the coronal tonsure; and the nation, being thus reformed, rejoiced as being newly placed under the direction of Peter, the most blessed prince of the apostles, and made secure under his protection."<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding these statements of Bede, it is probable that the Columban clergy of the Pictish kingdom refused compliance with Nectan's decree, for in 717 he drove "the family of Iona" across Drumalban<sup>3</sup>—that is, he expelled from his dominions the monastic fraternities which were subject to Iona. Seven years after this, Nectan himself abdicated his throne and became a cleric. The controversy concerning Easter—in other words, the increasing influence of the Church of Rome and the arbitrary procedure of King Nectan—had thus the effect of putting an end to the supremacy of Iona over the churches of the Pictish kingdom. The monasteries situated

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the Assembly was held at Scone, which was then the capital of the Pictish kingdom, and that this, the first of several decrees respecting the Church, was issued from the Mote Hill of Scone, which, from this incident, may have received the name "Hill of Belief" (Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 280).

<sup>2</sup> Bede, "Ecc. Hist." v. 21.

<sup>3</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 74.

both north and south of the Grampian range were now lost to that Church by whose missionaries they had been founded, and by which they had been possessed for a hundred and fifty years.

In Iona the Catholic observance of Easter and the coronal tonsure, which Adamnan had been unable to introduce, were afterwards adopted, as Bede informs us, through the influence of Egbert, a priest of the Angles "who had long lived in banishment in Ireland for the sake of Christ, and was most learned in the Scriptures, and renowned for long perfection of life, and who came among them and corrected their error."<sup>1</sup> As regards the date at which the change took place, Bede makes different assertions which are scarcely consistent with each other. In one passage he says it was effected in 716, and in that year it may be inferred from a statement by Tighernac that some portion of the monks conformed to the Roman Easter; but, according to the same annalist, the coronal tonsure was not adopted till two years later.<sup>2</sup> In another passage Bede says that Egbert remained thirteen years in Iona; that on the 24th April, in the year 729, he celebrated the Catholic Easter, and died on the same day; and that this was the first occasion on which it had been celebrated according to the Catholic reckoning. It thus appears that Egbert had not been able to induce the monks of Iona to adopt at once and unanimously the Roman usages; and we know that two parties continued to exist long after his time. To Bede himself the abandonment of the Scottish usages gave entire satisfaction. He considered it "a wonderful dispensation of the Divine goodness that the same nation that had willingly, and without envy, communicated to the people of the Angles the knowledge of the true Deity, should afterwards, by means of the nation of the Angles, be brought, in those things in which they were defective, to the true rule of life. Even as, on the contrary, the Britons who would not acquaint the Angles with the knowledge of the Christian faith, now when the people of the Angles enjoy the true faith, and are thoroughly instructed in its rules, continue inveterate in their errors, expose their heads without a crown (that is, without the coronal tonsure), and keep the solemnity

<sup>1</sup> Bede, "Eccl. Hist." iii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 279.

of Christ without the society of the Church.”<sup>1</sup> As the Britons of Strathclyde had conformed to Rome, it is probably to those of South Britain that Bede here refers.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the expulsion of the Columban clergy from the Pictish dominions by King Nectan in 717, the abbot of Iona, as representing its monastery, was virtually the primate of the churches and monasteries both of the Scots and Picts, as well as of the Britons of Strathclyde, where the Columban system had superseded that of Kentigern. Up to the same period such statements in reference to the Columban Church as are to be found in Bede’s works, together with the annals of the Irish Church, of which it formed a part, are our chief sources of information concerning ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland. After the year 717, when the Pictish Church was separated from that of Iona, the Irish annals are no longer to the same extent available for our guidance. Bede’s invaluable history also terminates about this period. We are thus left with scarcely any materials for the elucidation of the subsequent history of the Pictish Church, except obscure legends and traditions, and the uncertain inferences which may be drawn from them.

To the reign of the King Nectan who drove out the Columban clergy belongs the legend of Bonifacius, which seems to indicate an influx of Irish secular clergy into his dominions. According to this legend, Bonifacius was an Israelite, descended from the sister of the apostles Peter and Andrew, and born in Bethsaida of Galilee. Having been ordained priest he comes to Rome, where he is made bishop and cardinal, and finally Pope. Afterwards he departs from Rome on a mission to the northern regions beyond the boundaries of Europe, accompanied by Benedictus, Servandus, Pensandus, Benevolus, Madius, and Principius, bishops; two virgins, abbesses, Crescentia and Triduana; seven presbyters, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, seven acolytes, seven exorcists, seven readers, seven doorkeepers, and a very great multitude of God-fearing men and women. After a prosperous journey and voyage they arrive in Pictland,

<sup>1</sup> Bede, “*Eccl. Hist.*” v. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Though the Britons of Strathclyde conformed to Rome in the year 703, those of North Wales did not do so till 768, nor the Britons of South Wales till 777.



and having been divinely guided through the Scotie Sea, come to Restinoth. It happened that Nectan, king of the Picts, had come thither with his army; he, on seeing so great a multitude of foreigners, was astonished; but eventually with all his nobles and servants he receives baptism from St. Bonifacius and his bishops. The king then, in name of the Holy Trinity, gives the place of his baptism to Bonifacius; in which place a vast number of people are instructed by him in the Christian faith; and till old age he occupies himself in the erection of churches and other sacred buildings for their use. Finally Bonifacius, having performed many miracles, written a hundred and fifty books of the Gospels, founded as many churches with the same number of bishops and 1000 presbyters, and converted and baptized 36,000 men and women, departs to Christ in the eighty-fourth year of his age, and on the seventeenth day before the Kalends of April.<sup>1</sup>

According to another form of the legend, as given by the Bollandists, the name of this saint was Albanus Kiritanus, surnamed Bonifacius; and he is said to have founded a church at the mouth of the river Gobriat (Gowrie) in Pictland, after baptizing King Nectan; to have preached sixty years to the Picts and Scots; and to have died at the age of eighty at Rosmarky, where he was buried in the church of St. Peter.<sup>2</sup>

That some portions of this legend have a basis of truth appears probable from several dedications. The name of Madianus is preserved in St. Madoes, and that of Pensandus in Kilspindy. Triduana was commemorated at Restalrig and Rescobie. To St. Peter were dedicated the churches of Restennot, near Forfar, Invergowrie, Tealing, Meigle, Abernethy in Mar, Cultyr, Fivv, Inverugie, Drumdelgy, Ruthven, Glenbucket, Belty, Inverawen, and Duffus. So many dedications to him, extending over so wide a district of the country, prove an equally wide veneration for St. Peter at that time as the patron saint of Pictland. Rosmarky, a Columban monastery, founded, as we have seen, by St. Moluog of Lismore, was dedicated to St. Peter and Bonifacius; and the church of Scone, the capital of the Pictish kingdom, was dedicated to the Holy Trinity.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Aberdeen Breviary," Prop. Sanct. Pro Temp. Hyem. Fol. lxix.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes' "Kalendars," 281. <sup>3</sup> Ibid. 282; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 233.



“Kiritanus, surnamed Bonifacius,” was in reality a missionary from Ireland. In 697 a bishop Cuiritan—another form of the name—is found signing the canons of the synod held in Ireland at the instance of Adamnan, by which women were freed from the duty of serving in military expeditions, and which were also signed by Brude the son of Derile, king of Pictland, the brother and predecessor of Nectan. The 16th March is given in the Irish calendars as the “day” of Cuiritan, bishop and abbot of Rosmarky. This is the same as the 17th before the Kalends of April, which the legend assigns to Bonifacius; and the circumstance further confirms their identity. The earlier portion of the story is evidently fabulous. The legend apparently refers to Nectan’s adoption of the canonical Easter, and his efforts to induce his subjects to conform to the Church of Rome. Bishop Cuiritan belonged to that portion of the Irish Church who had so conformed, as appears from bishops, presbyters, and minor orders of the Roman secular clergy being mentioned as his companions.<sup>1</sup> If his mission to Pictland preceded Nectan’s conversion to Romanism, he may have been instrumental in bringing that event to pass. If, on the other hand, his arrival followed the expulsion of the Columban clergy, the purpose of his mission may have been to supply to some extent secular clergy in the places thus left vacant. The Columban clergy were all under monastic rule. The Church of Rome was differently organized. Though it included monasteries as a part of its system, the majority of its clergy were not monastic, but secular; and its increasing influence would now have the effect of putting an end to the exclusively monastic constitution of the Church, and of introducing a large admixture of secular clergy into the eastern districts of the country. The assertion of Wynton in his Chronicle, that at Rosmarky St. Boniface had secular canons under him, is thus most probably true.<sup>2</sup>

The legend of Fergus or Fergusianus, which is given in the Aberdeen Breviary, describes the work of another missionary in Scotland about this period. After he had been many years a bishop in Ireland, Fergus—so runs the legend—comes to the western parts of Scotland, and to the confines of Strogeth,

<sup>1</sup> Skene, “Celtic Scotland,” ii. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Wynton’s “Chronicle,” v. 13.

where he settles, and founds three churches. Thence he goes to Caithness, where for some time he occupies himself in converting the barbarous people. He then visits Buchan, resting in a place called Lungley, where he builds a basilica, which to this day exists, dedicated to his honour. Thence he comes to Glamis, where he consecrates a tabernacle for the God of Jacob, and where, full of years, he sleeps in the Lord. An abbot of Scone afterwards places his relics in a marble shrine, and carries off his head to his monastery, where many miracles are performed.<sup>1</sup> Now we find that at Strageath in Strathearn, and near it, are three churches dedicated to St. Patrick—Strageath, Blackford, and Dolpatrick—which shows a connection with Ireland. In Caithness the churches of Wick and Halkirk are dedicated to St. Fergus. In Buchan the village called Lungley in the legend is now named St. Fergus, and a church was dedicated to him at Inverugy, now Peterhead. In Banff there was a “parish of St. Fergus,” and the church of Dyce was dedicated to him. At Glamis we have St. Fergus’ cave and St. Fergus’ well; and the statement that the abbot of Scone carried off his head is confirmed by an entry in the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of a payment by King James IV. for a silver case for it. Moreover, at the council held at Rome in the year 721 two of the bishops who signed the canons which were then passed were Sedulius, who was bishop, as we have seen, of the Britons of Strathclyde, and Fergustus or Fergus, a bishop of Ireland, who was a Pict—that is, a Scottish Pict. This is evidently the Fergus of the legend, who appears to have been a Briton by birth, to have gone to Ireland, where he became a bishop, and afterwards to have returned and preached the Gospel in Pictland. His presence at the council in Rome proves that he must have been a bishop of that part of the Irish Church which had conformed to the Church of Rome.<sup>2</sup>

Another legend which appears to belong to this period is that of Servanus or Serf. We have seen that Joceline describes this saint as living at Culross, where he received the infant Kentigern, and trained him along with many boys in sacred

<sup>1</sup> Forbes’ “*Kalendars*,” 336.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes’ “*Kalendars*,” 337; Skene, “*Celtic Scotland*,” ii. 233.

learning. The Aberdeen Breviary also places Servanus in the fifth century, and connects him with Palladius; but another Life of St. Serf, which assigns him to the eighth century, and makes him to be a contemporary of Adamnan, is to be preferred. This Life indeed contains even more absurdities than most of such legends, but its later portions appear to embody historical facts. Like Bonifacius, Servanus is there said to have had an Eastern origin, and in several particulars their legendary history is very similar. Servanus was the son of Obeth, a king in the land of Canaan, and of his wife Alpia, whose father was a king of Arabia. A bishop of Alexandria baptizes him, and gives him the name of Servanus, because he serves Christ day and night in every good work. In Alexandria he studies, becomes a monk, and is ordained priest by the same bishop. Returning to Canaan, he is chosen by the people of that country as their bishop. After a varied experience in Jerusalem, Egypt, and Constantinople, he goes to Rome, and is raised to the Papal throne. Accompanied by many clerics and people, men and women, he crosses the Alps and arrives in the Ictian Sea, or English Channel. After several adventures they come to the river Forth, and Servanus is honourably received in Inchkeith by Adamnan, an abbot in Scotland. Says Servanus to him, How shall I dispose of my family and companions? Adamnan replies, Let them inhabit Fife as far as the Ochill Hills. And they do so. Afterwards Servanus with a hundred companions goes to Kinel, and thence to Culross, intending to live there, and at both places performs miracles. The king of the Picts, Brude, son of Dargart, bestows Culross upon him for ever. The saint then founds and dedicates a church and cemetery at Culross. Then he goes to the island in Lochleven to converse with Adamnan, who, perceiving that he wants a place suitable for a monastic community, willingly grants him the island. There Servanus founds a monastery, and remains seven years. Going forth thence he travels throughout the whole region of Fife founding churches.

In a cave at Dysart the saint is tempted by the devil, but he answers all the ensnaring questions propounded to him, and overcomes the tempter; and the place is still held sacred in honour of Servanus. Afterwards he is at Tillibothy, Tillicultry, and Alva, and performs various miracles. At Airthrey

a thief had stolen from a poor man a pet ram. The culprit, on being asked by Servanus if he was guilty, offers to swear on the saint's staff that he is innocent; whereupon the animal bleats in his stomach, and by this incontestable proof he is forced to confess his guilt. In his cell at Dunning Servanus is told of a terrible dragon which came into the town. The saint goes out to meet it, and slays it with his pastoral staff in a valley, which from that day has been called the Dragon's Valley. At length, having performed many miracles, practised many virtues, and founded many churches, and having given his peace to the brethren, the holy man yields up his spirit in his cell at Dunning on the first day of the Kalends of July; and his disciples and the people of almost the whole province carry his body to Culross, and there with psalms and hymns and canticles they honourably bury him.<sup>1</sup>

The Tract on the "Mothers of the Saints of Ireland," believed to have been written by Angus the Culdee, states that "Alma, the daughter of the king of the Picts, was the mother of Serb or Serf, son of Proc, king of Canaan, of Egypt (*sic*), and he is the venerable man who possesses Culross, in Stratherne, in the Comgells, between the Ochil Hills and the Sea of Giudan"—thus substituting "king of the Picts" for "king of Arabia" in the Life. To St. Serf were dedicated churches at Culross, Dysart, and Dunning, so far confirming certain portions of the legend. Creich and Monivaird were also dedicated to him. In Aberdeenshire he was commemorated as St. Sair. There is no good authority, however, for his alleged mission to the Orkney Islands.<sup>2</sup>

The Register of St. Andrew's Priory contains an abstract of a small collection of charters, translated from the original Gaelic into Latin, which belonged to the primitive monastery of Lochleven, and had come into the possession of the Priory when it acquired the island and its appendages. The first charter states that "Brude, the son of Dergard, who, according to old traditions, is said to have been the last of the kings of the Picts, gives the island of Lochlevine to

<sup>1</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 412.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves, "The Culdees of the British Islands," 124; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 258; Forbes' "Kalendars," 445.

Almighty God and to St. Servanus, and to the Keledei hermits dwelling there, who are serving, and shall serve God in that island." The King Brude here mentioned reigned about the year 842, and if it was he who gave Lochleven to Servanus, the monastery could not have been founded in the lifetime of Adamnan, who died in 704. Wynton, on the other hand, identifies the donor with Brude the son of Derile, who died in 706. It is probable that it was this Brude who gave the island; and who reigned from 697 to 706, and was the immediate predecessor of Nectan who expelled the Columban monks. The period to which St. Serf is to be assigned thus appears to have been about the beginning of the eighth century; and there is nothing unlikely in his having been befriended by Adamnan, who is said to have had a monastery in Inchkeith, or the island in the "Sea of Giudan."<sup>1</sup>

In the next charter of the collection referred to, the celebrated "Macbeth, son of Finlach, and Gruoch, daughter of Bodhe, king and queen of the Scots, give to Almighty God, and to the Keledei of the foresaid island of Lochlevine, Kyrkenes with its boundaries," which are recited at length. In a third charter King Macbeth gives Bolgyne to God and St. Servanus of Lochlevyne, and to the hermits there serving God.

The KELEDEI, or Culdees, thus brought into notice, have been the subject of a lengthened controversy which is not yet ended. Some have maintained that they had an Eastern origin, and were our earliest evangelists. It has been more generally believed that Columba was their founder; that their form of church government was characterized by the exclusion of bishops and adherence to primitive Presbyterian parity; that they rejected transubstantiation and other errors of later ages; and preserved their purity of doctrine and worship till swept away by the advancing tide of Romanism. In the light of recent inquiries these opinions are seen to be erroneous.

To Dr. Reeves, the learned editor of Adamnan's *Life of Columba*, belongs the merit of having cleared away no small part of the mystery connected with the Culdees. By

<sup>1</sup> Register of St. Andrew's Priory, 113-118; "Chron. Picts and Scots," 201; Reeves, "The Culdees of the British Islands," 125; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 259.



bringing together almost all the information concerning them to be found in ancient records, and by careful induction from the facts thus ascertained, he has exploded many theories which were the product of imperfect knowledge and a lively imagination. The subject has been still further elucidated by Dr. Skene. What the Culdees were, or had become, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is now tolerably well known. Obscurity still rests on their origin and early characteristics, and on the meaning of their name. As regards the period at which they originated, while there are probable indications of their existence in Ireland in the seventh century, "the term only came into use," Dr. Reeves tells us, "with anything like a determinate application towards the end of the eighth century."<sup>1</sup> In Scotland, according to Dr. Skene, "it is not till after the expulsion of the Columban monks from the kingdom of the Picts, in the beginning of the eighth century, that the name of Culdee appears."<sup>2</sup> It must be remembered, however, that almost all the documents which refer to the Culdees as existing at so early a period are themselves of a much later date. The word is not once found in the pages of Bede or Adamnan. The Columban monks of the sixth and seventh centuries were not Culdees, nor can the Scottish Church of that period be described as a Culdee Church. In Ireland, where the name originated, it was applied to societies which had no connection with Columba.

The Irish form of the name was *Ceile De* or *Cele De*. In Scotland it was most commonly Latinized by *Kelcdeus*. Joceline, in his Life of St. Kentigern, writes it *Calledgeus*. *Culdeus* or *Culdee*, the form of the word now generally used, appears to have been brought into vogue by Hector Boethius, who explains it as equivalent to *cultor Dei*, a worshipper of God, as if there were an affinity between *cele* and *colo*, I worship. Some English and Irish records—for there were Culdees in England as well as in Ireland and Scotland—following the same erroneous etymology, represent the name by *Colideus*. In *Ceile De*, the original Irish form, *De* is the genitive of the word *Dia*, signifying God. Of *Ceile* the primary meaning is "companion" or

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, "The Culdees of the British Islands, as they appear in History," 9.

<sup>2</sup> Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 226.

"spouse;" a secondary sense is "servant." Dr. Reeves adopts the latter as the import of the word in the compound *Ceile De*. He holds that in the Latin Church *servire Deo* (to serve God) was used in a restricted sense as meaning "to lead a monastic life," so that *servus Dei* (servant of God) and *monachus* (monk) became convertible terms; and that, as the equivalent of *servus Dei*, the Irish used *Ceile De*, "which in its employment possessed all the latitude of its model, and, in the lapse of ages, underwent all the modifications or limitations of meaning which the changes of time and circumstances, or local usage, produced in the class to whom the epithet was applied."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Skene, on the other hand, adopts the primary meaning of *Ceile*, and understands the compound *Ceile De* in the sense of companionship or near connection with God. He rightly objects to Dr. Reeves' rendering of the word, because *servus Dei* never appears translated by *Ceile De*, and also because the latter term "is applied to a distinct class who were not very numerous in Ireland, while the term *servus Dei* is a general expression applicable to 'religious' of all classes, and included the secular canons as well as the monks."<sup>2</sup>

In developing his own theory Dr. Skene describes the increasing asceticism of the Church, which induced monks to forsake the common life of the monastery for the solitary cell of the anchorite, and which we have found exemplified by St. Cuthbert in the Isle of Farne. From a belief that a life of self-mortification and benevolence to the sick and bereaved was a "cultus" or "religio" peculiarly acceptable to God the Father, anchorites "were called *Deicolæ*, or God-worshippers, in contrast to *Christicolæ*, the name applied in a general sense to all Christians, and, in a narrower application, to monks leading a cœnobitical life." Attempts were made in the seventh century to bring the *Deicolæ* under the monastic rule, but with little success. In the year 747 Chrodigang, bishop of Metz, founded the order of secular canons, by which institution the secular clergy, with certain exceptions, were to live together in a cloister, sleep in one dormitory, and eat in the same refectory—a kind of cœnobitical life, but with considerable relaxations. The *Deicolæ* also were brought under

<sup>1</sup> "The Culdees of the British Islands," 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> "Celtic Scotland," ii. 251.

this canonical rule; and the system was adopted and given effect to by a general council held at Aix-la-Chapelle in the year 816.

Preference for a solitary life showed itself also in the Celtic Church. In some cases an abbot or monk withdrew for a time from the monastery, without severing his connection with it, and occupied a separate cell. The cells used for this purpose were of the dome-shaped or "bee-hive" form, and were called *Clochans*, and also *Carcair*, or prison cells, which, as we have seen, were exemplified in the island of Hinba, where one was occupied by Virgnous. In other cases a monk withdrew from the monastery altogether to some solitary spot or island, where he might spend the rest of his life in solitude, such places being termed "Deserts," or "Disearths." Thus Cormac, Adamnan tells us, sailed no less than three times in quest of a "desert" in the ocean. On the third of these voyages he proceeded due north for fourteen days and nights without seeing land; and when the wind changed, he sailed south and returned to Iona.<sup>1</sup> Such anchorites were also termed *Deoraidh*, or strangers, as being "strangers and pilgrims" in the religious sense of the term. Towards the end of the sixth century the monastic system in Ireland was to some extent broken in upon by this passion for a solitary life, which gave rise to the Third Order of the saints, already referred to. These solitaries sometimes formed communities occupying separate cells within the same inclosure. A specimen of such establishments is still to be seen on the island of Ardoilean, on the west coast of Connemara, the formation of which is attributed to Fechan, or Vigeanus, the patron saint of the Scottish churches of St. Vigean's, and, probably, Ecclefechan. Within a circular stone wall, or *Cashel*, are two *Clochans* and several other cells, with an oratory, but no buildings adapted for cœnobitical life. To such anchorites, in lieu of the name *Deicola*, that of *Ceile De*, Dr. Skene tells us, was applied. "These terms," he says, "though not etymologically equivalent, may be considered as correlative, and intended to represent the same class; and as *Christicola* becomes in Irish *Celchchrist*, so *Deicola* assumes in Irish the form

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Columba," bk. ii. chap. 43.

of *Ceile De*." Like the *Deicola*, the *Ceile De* also came eventually under the canonical rule.<sup>1</sup>

Such is a brief statement of Dr. Skene's account of the origin of the Culdees, which is set forth with much learning and elaboration. It must be confessed, however, that his reasoning—founded, as much of it is, on evidence of a somewhat shadowy kind—is not on all points convincing. His quotations from ancient authors do not prove that the term *Deicola* denoted an anchorite. It appears to have had a wider meaning, and to have been applied to persons of eminent sanctity of every ecclesiastical rank, whether they were or were not anchorites. If *Ceile De* was the Irish equivalent for *Deicola*, we should expect that old Irish writers, when using the Latin language, would translate the former by the latter term. They never do so. *Keledeus* or *Colideus* is the word they employ. The designation *Ceile De* appears to have been of native origin, and neither connected with *Deicola* nor suggested by it. It is, moreover, doubtful if the Irish *Ceile De* were at first solitary anchorites, and afterwards made to live together. Though one or two individuals of this description were known as *Ceile De*, proof is wanting that the great body of the latter class were originally anchorites. It is more likely that they were communities from their origin.<sup>2</sup>

Taking *Ceile De* in its primary sense of companionship with God, we may believe that the Culdees were at first ascetics, and probably originated in a reaction from the decay of monastic observance. Their institution may have been in some respects analogous to that of the various orders of mediæval monks, who, as they successively arose, sought to reform the corruptions of their times. The Celtic word for a monk was *manach*. From their being called by a different name, the Culdees appear to have been a class of persons distinct from monks, since the adoption of a new name by a religious body usually implies some new peculiarity of character or function. Thus St. Maelruain of Tamhlacht, now Tallaght, near Dublin, who died in the year 792, "gathered round him," says Dr. Reeves, "a fraternity, for whom, amidst the prevailing corruption of

<sup>1</sup> Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii., chap. vi.

<sup>2</sup> See "The Culdees," by Rev. Colin C. Grant, in *The Scottish Review*, April, 1888.



religion and laxity of monastic discipline, he ordained certain rules of stricter observance, which consisted partly of precepts for conventual and sacerdotal guidance, but were especially distinguished by the principles laid down, and the regulations prescribed, for religious worship and the exercise of devotion." A religious rule, ascribed to him, is preserved, entitled "The Rule of the Cele-nde, from the poem which Maelruain composed." It is written in Irish; and in its present form is of a date not earlier than the twelfth or thirteenth century, but is probably a version of a much earlier document. One of the members of this fraternity was called Angus the Cele De, and was the author of the metrical Calendar or Felire to which we have already had occasion to refer. He had previously been a monk at Clonenagh, and had founded a church called after him Disert-Aenguis, now Disertenos, in Queen's County.<sup>1</sup>

The church of Tamhlacht was founded about twenty-four years after Chrodigang had instituted the order of canons, who, says Dr. Reeves, were "an intermediate class between monks and secular priests, adopting to a great extent the discipline, without the vows, of the monastic system, and discharging the office of ministers in various churches. Possibly the institution of Maelruain may have borrowed from, or possessed some features in common with, the order of canons; for certain it is that in after ages both the *Keledei* of Scotland and the *Colidei* of Ireland exhibited in their discipline the main characteristics of secular canons."<sup>2</sup> Under the year 811, the Annals of the Four Masters have the following entry:—"In this year the *Cele De* came over the sea with dry feet without a vessel; and a written roll was given him from heaven, out of which he preached to the Irish; and it was carried up again when the sermon was finished. This ecclesiastic used to go every day southwards across the sea after finishing his sermon."<sup>3</sup> Eliminating the miraculous element from this statement, Dr. Skene concludes that what the *Cele De* introduced into Ireland was the canonical rule. But from language so vague no definite inference of any kind can be safely drawn. Of nearly equal vagueness is the following entry, under the year 921, in the same Annals, which Dr. Skene understands as recording the

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, "The Culdees of the British Islands," 7-9.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. 10.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid. 6.



introduction of the canonical rule among the Culdees of Scotland:—"Maenach, a *Cele De*, came across the sea from the west to establish the laws of Ireland."<sup>1</sup>

The Irish Culdee fraternities were nine in number. At Armagh they existed from the commencement of the tenth century till the Reformation. In England there were Culdees at York, where they were the officiating clergy of the cathedral church of St. Peter in 936, and "discharged the double function of divine service and eleemosynary entertainment, thus combining the two leading characteristics of the old conventual system which was common to the Irish and Benedictine rules."<sup>2</sup> There were probably Culdees at Canterbury also. In Wales the island of Bardsey possessed a fraternity of them. There is record evidence for the existence in Scotland of thirteen Culdee establishments, and probably there were a few more for which such proof cannot be adduced. At places which afterwards became episcopal sees there were eight of these—namely, at St. Andrews, Dunkeld, Brechin, Rosmarky, Dunblane, Dornoch, Lismore, and Iona; and there were Culdees at Lochleven, Abernethy, Monymusk, Muthil, and Monifieth.<sup>3</sup> The superior of these societies was generally styled *Præpositus* or Prior; sometimes Head or Magister; seldom Abbot.<sup>4</sup> Hospitals are mentioned in connection with many of them.

We have seen that St. Kentigern, according to his biographer Joceline, formed a collegiate or semi-monastic fraternity at Glasgow, who were occupied in manual labour, fastings, and devotional exercises; dwelt in single cottages; and were called *Calledei*. Like the Culdees of Lochleven, they thus appear to have been solitaries, but only to an extent compatible with their being united in one society for the purpose of ascetic and religious observance. If this community was instituted by St. Kentigern, the event must have preceded the settlement of Culdees at Lochleven. But it is more probable that as Joceline antedates the period of St. Serf in assigning to him Kentigern as his disciple, so by a prolepsis of a century and a half he ascribes to the apostle of Strathclyde the foundation of a Culdee

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, "The Culdees of the British Islands," 6; Skene, "Celtic Scotland" ii. 325.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves, "The Culdees of the British Islands," parts ii. and iv. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* part iii. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 8.

fraternity which did not come into existence till the early part of the eighth century, when also the real Serf flourished.<sup>1</sup> Our records contain no further mention of Culdees at Glasgow.

From the legend of St. Regulus, which has been already narrated, we have seen that the historical saint of that name was connected with the Columban Church founded at Kilrymont by Cainnech towards the end of the sixth century, and that the fictitious Regulus belonged to the church which King Hungus founded or reconstructed near the middle of the eighth century. To the latter church the supposed relics of St. Andrew were brought, and the kingdom was placed under the patronage of that apostle twenty-six years after Hungus had made St. Peter its patron saint. According to one form of the legend, the clergy who accompanied St. Regulus were secular, and they were accompanied by eight hermits and three virgins.<sup>2</sup> These hermits were probably, like those of Lochleven, Culdees, as we know that there were clergy of this class afterwards at St. Andrews.

Dunkeld is the next place where Culdees appear. According to the Chronicle of the Picts and Scots, King Constantine, son of Fergus, founded the church of Dunkeld between the years 810 and 820.<sup>3</sup> Dean Mylne, who was a canon of Dunkeld about 1485, and the historian of its bishops, thus describes its ancient chapter:—"In this monastery Constantine, king of the Picts, placed religious men, commonly called Kelledei, otherwise Colidei, that is, God-worshippers, who, however, after the usage of the Eastern Church, had wives (from whom they lived apart when taking their turn in the sacred offices), as afterwards grew to be the custom in the church of the blessed Regulus, now called St. Andrews."<sup>4</sup> Wynton calls these Culdees secular canons, and says that in—

"Awcht hundyr wyntyrr and fyftene  
Fra God tuk fleysch off Mary schene,  
The kyng off Peychtis Constantyne  
Be Tay than foundyd Dwnkeldyne,  
A place solempne cathedrale,  
Dowyd welle in temporalle,

<sup>1</sup> Skene, "Celtic Scot.," ii. 261. <sup>2</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 138, 183. <sup>3</sup> Ibid. 201, 202.

<sup>4</sup> Mylne, "Vitæ Dunkeldensis Ecclesiæ Episcoporum," 4, 5; Reeves, "The Culdees of the British Islands," 117, 118.

The byschope and chanownys thare  
 Serwys God and Saynet Colme, seculare,  
 Off oure byschoprykis, off renowne  
 The thryd and reputatiowne.”<sup>1</sup>

Some have maintained that though Columba cannot be claimed as the founder of the fraternities called Culdees, these were nevertheless the ecclesiastical descendants of the Columban clergy under a new name, and were not really a separate body. But not only is the adoption or application of the new name left unaccounted for by this hypothesis, but other circumstances are opposed to it. As the nine Culdee communities of Ireland cannot have represented the whole Church of that country, so the thirteen societies of the same class in Scotland, with the probable addition of a few others, could hardly have comprised all its Christian establishments. The places where there were either Columban monks or secular clergy, many of which afterwards became the sites of parish churches, must have greatly exceeded that number. In the monasteries of Deer and Turriff, for example, founded by Columba and Congan respectively, there were Columban clergy down to the twelfth century; and there is no mention of the existence of Culdees at these places. The same is true of the extensive territory belonging to the abbacy of Dull, which was founded by Adamnan; of the abbacy of Glendochart, founded by Fillan; and of Argyll, which stretched from the Firth of Clyde to Loch Broom, and was included till the year 1200 in the diocese of Dunkeld. If the Culdees were the Columban clergy under a new name, it is especially in these districts that we should expect to find traces of their presence. Yet there is no mention of them anywhere throughout that wide region except in Iona itself, and at the seat of the bishopric of Argyll, or Lismore, after its separation from the diocese of Dunkeld. Moreover, in at least two monasteries—those of Iona and Abernethy—Culdees appear as distinct from the other clergy. It is stated in the Annals of Ulster that in the year 1164 the chiefs of the “family of Ia” (or Iona)—namely, the great priest, the reader, the hermit, the head of the *Cele De*, and the chiefs of the family of Ia in general—went as a deputation to the Abbot of Derry, and invited

<sup>1</sup> Wynton, “The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland,” book vi. chap. viii.

him to accept the abbacy of their monastery. "From this we learn," says Dr. Reeves, "that the *Cele De* of Hy were only a section of the clerical community, whose superior was styled 'head,' not 'prior,' and took a low rank among the notables of the place. He probably held a position similar to that of præcentor elsewhere, and his subordinates were most likely the clerical body who performed the ordinary services of the church."<sup>1</sup> About the end of the eleventh century the clergy of Abernethy appear, among other persons, as witnesses to a charter, and they then consist of two secular priests, a body of *Keledei*, three in number, of whom two were priests, and the "rector of the schools of Abernethy," who, it is conjectured, may have been the *Ferleighinn*, or reader of the Celtic churches.<sup>2</sup>

Though it thus appears that the Culdees were a class distinct from the other clergy, yet, if we are to believe Hector Boece,<sup>3</sup> the name was latterly applied by the common people to all priests indiscriminately. It is certain that though the Culdees originated in a reaction from the laxity of monastic discipline, they also in course of time fell away from their initial asceticism; and after the introduction, in the twelfth century, of the more stringent Orders of the Church of Rome, the name Culdee came to be synonymous with laxity and worldliness.

Reverting to Iona, we find that from the year 727 to 752, during the abbacy of Feidlimidh, who appears to have belonged to the Scottish or conservative, as opposed to the Roman party, there was a rival abbot named Cillene Droichteach, who was an anchorite. The epithet Droichteach signifies a bridge-maker. It may have been applied to Cillene as being probably the constructor of a raised causeway through the shallow lake which fed the mill-stream of the monastery. The causeway led to a solitary erection, whose foundations still exist, among the hills on the west, and this may have been the anchorite's cell to which Cillene retired.<sup>4</sup>

To this, if not a somewhat earlier, period are perhaps to be assigned two missionaries named Modan and Ronan, whose

<sup>1</sup> "The Culdees of the British Islands," 81.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 128.

<sup>3</sup> "Invaluit id nomen apud vulgus in tantum, ut sacerdotes omnes ad nostra pene tempora vulgo Culdei, i.e. Cultores Dei, sine discrimine vocitarentur." H. Boethius, "Scot. Hist." lib. vi. fol. 92, edit. 1575.

<sup>4</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, clxxiii.; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 284.



course can be traced in the Western Highlands and Islands, and the proximity of some of whose dedications to each other seems to indicate that they were engaged in the same mission. There were at least two saints of the name of Modan. One, who was an abbot, is said to have been at Dryburgh, but this is doubtful. There is better authority for his appearance at Eaglaisbreac, or "the Speckled Church," which the Angles called Fakhkirk, a word having the same meaning, and now written Falkirk. We find both him and Ronan in Lorn, where Balimhaodan is the old name of Ardochattan on Loch Etive; on the opposite side of which is Kilmaronog.<sup>1</sup> Modan died at Rosnevet, or "the Promontory of the Sanctuary," now Roseneath; and Dunbartonshire has its Kilmaronock. Probably after Modan's death Ronan went to the Isles, and in Iona there are Port Ronan, Teampull Ronaig, and its burying-ground, Cladh Ronan. His name is also commemorated in Rona, an island off Raasa; in another Rona sixty miles north-east of Lewis; and in St. Ronan's Isle, on the west coast of Shetland. Under the year 737 Tighernac records Ronan's death as abbot of Kingarth in Bute. The same annalist informs us that in 737 the co-arb or heir of Maelrubha of Aporcrosan was drowned in the deep sea with his sailors, twenty-two in number; and that twelve years afterwards the "family" of Iona were drowned during a hurricane. In 772 Breasal became abbot of Iona, and with his accession the long-continued schism was brought to an end. The whole "family" now appear to have conformed in all points to the Roman usages. Abbot Breasal's rule was fully acknowledged by the Columban monasteries in Ireland. During his tenure of office Niall Frosach, king of all Ireland, retired as a "pilgrim" to Iona, and died there in 778; and Artgaile, king of Connaught, also ended his days, in 790, in the sacred Isle. Six years before this, and probably in consequence of the conquest of the kingdom of Dalriada about the same time by the Picts, the relics of the three sons of Erc were removed from Iona to the cemetery of Tailten in Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maronog is, according to the Irish usage, a name of affection for Ronan, with *mo*, meaning "my," as a prefix, and *og*, meaning "little," as a suffix. When the name ended with the diminutive form *an*, this was changed into *og*. Moronog thus means "my little Ronan;" Mocholmog, "my little Colman;" Moaedog or Madoc, "my little Aidan." *Kil* denotes a church. (See Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 33, 282.)

<sup>2</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 76; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 285-289.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## DECAY AND EXTINCTION OF THE CELTIC CHURCH.

Danish invasions and ravages—Martyrdom of St. Blathmac—The co-arbs of Columcille—Union of the Scottish and Pictish kingdoms—The primacy of the Columban monasteries transferred to Dunkeld—Bishops of Abernethy—Its round tower—Legend of St. Adrian—First mention of "The Scottish Church"—Primacy transferred to St. Andrews—Columba's crosier, brechannoch, and psalter—St. Cadroe—Brechin founded—Its round tower—Norwegians—Deerness—Conversion of Norwegian colonists—Marriage of Columban clergy—Macbeth—Queen Margaret—Her councils and reforms—Her attention to anchorites—Abuses at St. Andrews and elsewhere—Church property secularized—Abthanes—Extinction of the old Celtic Church—Its surviving vestiges.

TOWARDS the end of the eighth century Iona was subjected to the first of a series of disasters, from the effects of which it never wholly recovered. This was an invasion by Danish pirates, who now began to ravage the coasts of Britain and Ireland. The monasteries, as possessing great opulence, and being at the same time quite unprotected, were the special objects of their depredations. But the lust of plunder was not the sole motive which led the Danes to attack these establishments. They were also influenced by religious hatred. The Emperor Charlemagne, in his misguided zeal for the propagation of Christianity, had invaded Saxony and North Germany, and inflicted relentless cruelties on their pagan inhabitants, in order to compel them to become Christians. In one day he had caused 4500 Saxons to be beheaded. Those who could escape this peculiar method of conversion fled to Denmark and Scandinavia, whose people worshipped the same gods as themselves, and by their sad story they filled them with intense hatred of the Christian faith. In wreaking their vengeance on churches and monasteries, the Danish pirates were but requiting the persecution of their co-religionists; and thus the British and Irish clergy became victims to the cruel policy of a Christian prince. The first place attacked by the Danes was the monastery of Lindisfarne, where their procedure is thus described by Simeon of Durham:—"In the same year (793) the pagans from the northern region came with a naval armament to Britain like stinging hornets, and overran the country in all

directions like fierce wolves, plundering, tearing, and killing not only sheep and oxen, but priests and levites, and choirs of monks and nuns. They came to the church of Lindisfarne and laid all waste with dreadful havoc, trod with unhallowed feet the holy places, dug up the altars, and carried off all the treasures of the holy church. Some of the brethren they killed; some they carried off in chains; many they cast out naked and loaded with insults; some they drowned in the sea.”<sup>1</sup> During the following years they plundered and burnt the monastery of Wearmouth, and numerous churches and monasteries in Ireland. In 795 they plundered Iona, and in 798 the islands between Scotland and Ireland. In 802 they burnt the monastery of Iona; and returning four years later, they slew its whole “family,” who then numbered only sixty-eight persons. As its insular situation rendered it so liable to these ravages, Abbot Cellach, who had probably been absent in Ireland when the massacre of the monks took place, now constituted Kells, in Meath, the chief seat of the Columban order, a dignity which had hitherto belonged to Iona. The monastery of Kells was about the same time rebuilt of stone; and the general practice of constructing churches and monasteries of this material appears to have owed its introduction to the ravages of the Danish pirates.<sup>2</sup> Stone churches must, however, have been erected from the earliest times in remote islands where wood neither grew nor could be easily procured. Remains of such edifices of the most primitive Celtic type still exist in many of the Northern and Western Islands, such as those of Tigh Beannachadh in Lewis, Teampull Beannachadh on one of the Flannan Isles, and Teampull Sula-Sgeir.

For some time previous to this period a custom had been growing up, especially in the Irish Church, of disinterring the bones of saints, and placing them in wooden coffins or shrines, which in many cases were richly ornamented with the precious metals. The relics thus preserved became objects of superstitious veneration, and were occasionally carried about from place to place, and used as a warrant, which it was reckoned

<sup>1</sup> “Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,” Simeon of Durham, quoted by Skene, “Celtic Scotland,” i. 303.

<sup>2</sup> Irish Annals, quoted by Skene, “Celtic Scotland,” ii. 290, 291.

impious to disregard, for levying contributions and enforcing other privileges of the monasteries which the saint had founded. We have seen that the bones of St. Cuthbert had been thus enshrined, and numerous other instances of the practice are recorded. Some time previous to the year 807, the remains of Columba appear to have been disinterred and removed to Ireland, since they are mentioned under that year as preserved in a shrine at the church of Saul Patrick in the county of Down. Their transportation was probably rendered necessary by the ravages of the Danish pirates. Only for some such cogent reason would the bones of a venerated founder have been removed from his chief monastery.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 818 Abbot Diarmaid restored Columba's shrine to Iona, from which it may be inferred that the island monastery also had now been rebuilt with stone. The remains of stone buildings close to, but much older than, the ruins of the Benedictine abbey, seem to show that the new monastery was placed not on the old site, but at some distance to the south, where it could be defended by the construction of fortifications on the high ground on its west side, traces of which may still be seen there.<sup>2</sup> In the new church would no doubt be placed the shrine and relics of Columba, the possession of which would confer upon it the same sanctity which had belonged to the original wooden structure, and reconcile the reassembled monks to the change of site. The fortifications proved insufficient. In 825—the seventh year after the new monastery had been completed—the Danes attacked it, and with too much success. Among the monks was one named Blathmac, who is said to have been heir to a throne in Ireland before he embraced a monastic life. He was now in charge of the monastery, Diarmaid, the abbot, being probably absent in Ireland. Addressing the brethren, Blathmac exhorted them to be courageous for the sake of Christ, but counselled the timid to fly. Some accordingly made their escape to places of safety. Others remained, ready to face death rather than abandon their charge. Taking Columba's shrine, which was no doubt adorned with gold and silver, and would be eagerly sought for by the

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' *Adamnan*, ed. 1874, lxxxii.-ii.: Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 292.

<sup>2</sup> Skene, *ibid.* 297.

Danes in the hope of its proving a valuable prize, they buried it in the earth, and covered the spot with sods. At Blathmac's own request they appear to have concealed from him the place where it was deposited, so that he might truly tell the marauders that he knew not where it was. Furiously they rushed on the monks and put them to the sword. Blathmac alone remained alive. Coming to him, as he stood before the altar celebrating mass, they required him to give up the precious metals which inclosed Columba's bones. In their own barbarous tongue he told them that he neither knew where the gold which they sought was hidden, nor, if he were permitted to know, would his lips ever reveal it. He was then cut in pieces while commending his soul to God. This cruel martyrdom is graphically described in a Latin poem of 172 hexameter verses by Walafrid Strabo, abbot of Angiades or Eichenau, who was contemporary with the event.<sup>1</sup>

Four years after this massacre the surviving monks had reassembled under Abbot Diarmaid, and appear to have built a small chapel or oratory over the spot in which the shrine had been buried; and its walls may still be seen at the west end of the ruins of the Benedictine abbey. Here are two stone cists, one of which probably contained the shrine of Columba, and the other the remains of the heroic Blathmac. During these troubles, what were called the *mionna* or reliquaries of Columba, which included articles of veneration upon which oaths used to be administered, such as his crozier, books, and vestments, but not his bones—these being termed *martra*—were several times carried backwards and forwards between Iona and Ireland. In the year 854 Abbot Innreachtach was slain by the Saxons while on his way to Rome. He was called the “co-arb,” or heir, of Columcille—a designation which has already been explained in connection with the constitution of the Irish Church. This official title appears to have been now assumed by the abbots of Iona, when they sometimes found it necessary to assert their rights, whether ecclesiastical or temporal, against laymen who sought to encroach on the possessions and privileges of their monasteries. The title of co-arb,

<sup>1</sup> This poem is printed in Pinkerton, “Vitæ Sanctorum Scotiæ,” p. 459, and in Metcalfe's edition of 1889, ii. 293.



which we have seen applied also to the abbot of Applecross, was used in other similar cases. Thus we find mention of the co-arb of St. Patrick, and of the co-arb of Adamnan. The Pope of Rome was even styled the co-arb of St. Peter.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 844 an event took place which was to rescue, to some extent, the Columban Church from its depressed condition, and open up to it a new career of prosperity. By a revolution, the precise nature of which, in consequence of the deficiency and obscurity of our annals at this period, has not been ascertained, a Scottish dynasty was placed on the Pictish throne, and under Kenneth Macalpin, king of the Scots, Dalriada and Pictland were permanently united in one kingdom. Sympathizing, doubtless, with the Scottish clergy in their regret or resentment at the harsh and arbitrary conduct of King Nectan in banishing their predecessors from the Pictish dominions, Kenneth now proceeded to restore their Church, though on a different basis, throughout the territory of the Southern Picts. We have seen that his predecessor Constantine had founded a monastery at Dunkeld about the year 815, and placed in it a community of Culdees. In 850 Kenneth rebuilt it, and transferred to it from Iona the relics of Columba, or part of them, the possession of which would constitute it an *Annoid*, or mother church, over the Columban monasteries in Scotland. It would thus occupy a position with respect to these similar to that which had been enjoyed by Kells after the supremacy over the Columban monasteries—which it would still retain in regard to those of Ireland—had been conferred upon it. It appears that Kenneth made choice of Dunkeld, on account of its being situated in the centre of his kingdom, as the seat of a bishop, under whom he might place the reorganized Scottish monasteries. The territory of the Southern Picts was called Fortrenn; and the Irish Annals mention the death of Tuathal, first bishop of Fortrenn and abbot of Dunkeld, in 865, five years after Kenneth's death. Tuathal was the last, as well as the first, person in whom these two offices were united, for the succeeding abbot's name is recorded without the title of bishop of Fortrenn. He is simply styled *princeps*,

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, edition 1874, p. 232; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 303.



or superior, of Dunkeld. Constantine, the son and successor of Kenneth, removed the seat of the bishopric from Dunkeld to Abernethy. Referring to the latter, Bower says, "In that church there were three elections of bishops made, when there was only one bishop in Scotland. That place was now for some time the principal royal and episcopal seat of the whole kingdom of the Picts."<sup>1</sup> The names of these three bishops are unrecorded. Dr. Skene conjectures that one of them may have been St. Ethernasc, to whom the neighbouring church of Lathrisk, now Kettle, was dedicated. His day in both the Scotch and Irish Calendars is the 22nd December, and he probably had some connection with the mother church of St. Bridget of Kildare.<sup>2</sup>

As Dunkeld and Abernethy successively rose in ecclesiastical importance, so Iona declined. On the death of Abbot Inn-reachtach, Cellach, abbot of Kildare, was appointed his successor, holding both offices; and Maelbrighde, the third abbot of Iona after Cellach, held the same office at Armagh and Raphoe, and is styled by the Four Masters "co-arb of Patrick, Columcille, and Adamnan, head of the piety of all Ireland, and of the greater part of Europe."<sup>3</sup> The union of the abbacy of Iona with that of these Irish monasteries shows how depreciated was the position which it now held. There is evidence, however, that the restoration of the Columban Church in the territory of the Southern Picts led to a renewal of intercourse with the Irish Church, and the introduction of Irish ecclesiastics into the eastern districts of Scotland. It is the Irish Annals alone which give us the names of the early abbots of Dunkeld, and these names are plainly Hibernian.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the death of the above-mentioned Cellach, abbot of Kildare and Iona, is stated to have taken place "in the territory of the Picts" in 865, the same year in which that of Tuathal, first bishop of Fortrenn, occurred.<sup>5</sup> His visit to Pictland was no doubt occasioned by some business connected with the Columban monasteries, though we neither know its nature nor the place or circumstances of his death. It has been conjectured<sup>6</sup> that he may have died at Abernethy, which was dedi-

<sup>1</sup> "Scotichronicon," iv. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Celtic Scotland," ii. 311; Forbes' "Kalendars," 334.

<sup>3</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, clxxv.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. lxx.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. clxxv.; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 308.

<sup>6</sup> Skene, *ibid.*

cated to St. Bridget of Kildare, but this is unlikely. If the event had occurred at a place so well known at that period as Abernethy, this would hardly have been described in such vague terms as "the territory of the Picts."

It is most probably to the period when the bishops of Fortrenn had their seat at Abernethy that the erection of its celebrated round tower is to be assigned. The Pictish Chronicle informs us that before the death of Kenneth Macalpin, which took place in the year 860, the Danes laid waste Pictland as far as Clunie (in Stormont) and Dunkeld. They no doubt proceeded to these places by the firth and valley of the Tay, along whose southern bank there are to this day numerous traditions and traces of their presence. It is not likely that a place of so much importance as Abernethy would escape their attention. Be this as it may, we may feel assured that it was dread of their ravages which here, as elsewhere, led to the erection of a tower of defence; and that it was reared soon after they had visited Dunkeld. As it is of the well-known Irish type, it furnishes another proof of the renewal of intercourse between the Irish and Pictish Churches.

The origin of the round towers, and the purposes they were intended to serve, were till a recent period involved in mystery. A Danish, and even a Phœnician origin has been attributed to them. It has been maintained that they were fire-temples; that they were places from which Druidical festivals were proclaimed; that they were astronomical observatories; that they were the retreats of anchorites. Their real uses have been at length determined by the learned and exhaustive investigations of Dr. Petrie.<sup>1</sup> He has proved that they were designed to serve as belfries, and also as keeps, or places of strength, for the preservation of ecclesiastical utensils, books, relics, and other valuables; and to which clerics could retire for security in cases of sudden predatory attack. Dr. Petrie assigns the erection of some of the round towers of Ireland to a date probably as early as the fifth century; but this conclusion is not generally accepted. Most

<sup>1</sup> "The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland anterior to the Anglo-Norman Invasion: comprising an Essay on the Origin and Uses of the Round Towers of Ireland," by George Petrie, 1845. See pp. 4-6.

of them appear to have been built between the ninth and twelfth centuries. It is said that there were in Ireland, at the beginning of the present century, 118 circular towers, and that there are still seventy-six more or less complete. These structures, which were hollow pillars, were commonly divided into several stories by wooden or stone floors, which were reached by ladders from within, and their average height amounted to from 100 to 120 feet. There was a window in each story, and below the conical stone roof by which the towers were surmounted there were four windows, which in most cases faced the cardinal points. The walls were of a tapering form, their circumference at the summit being less than at the base. The door was generally from eight to fifteen feet above the ground, so as to prevent easy entrance by an enemy. The towers stood separate from the churches to which they belonged. They were in most cases reared at places which were exposed to the ravages of the Northmen. The erection of *campanilia*, or bell-towers, on the Continent appears to have originated in the eighth century. A few such towers are to be found there more or less resembling the Irish round towers; but they are not isolated, nor were they used as places of security. Yet the design of these may have been thence carried to Ireland, where, however, it acquired a peculiar development.<sup>1</sup>

In Scotland there are only two round towers on the mainland—those of Abernethy and Brechin; and there is no evidence that they were ever more numerous. There is one in Orkney, at the church of Egilshay, which was dedicated to St. Magnus, who was there slain in 1104 by order of his cousin Haco; but it is of a late and inferior type. It is not isolated, but is connected with, and entered from, the west gable of the church. Its conical cap no longer exists. The old parochial church of Deerness had a round tower at each side of the chancel, both of which were surmounted by a conical cap. It is said there were at one time round towers in Shetland at West Burray, Tingwall, and Ireland Head. These five towers have all disappeared.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Miss Stokes, in Lord Dunraven's "Notes on Irish Architecture," ii. 147, 148; Dr. Stokes, "Ireland and the Celtic Church," second edition, lecture xii.; and Anderson, "Scotland in Early Christian Times," 56. <sup>2</sup> Anderson, *ibid.* 59, 60.

Abernethy round tower now wants its conical roof. As the upper part is built of stone of a kind different from that used in the lower part, the tower was probably at some time rebuilt. This, however, is not a necessary inference. Petrie supposes that this edifice was erected between the years 712 and 727 by those architects from Northumbria whom King Nectan sent for, that they might build a church "in the Roman manner;" but this opinion is erroneous. The tower is evidently not of Roman, but of Irish design. Nectan's church was to be dedicated to St. Peter, and there was no such dedication at Abernethy. It is not stated that it was to have been erected in Nectan's capital. Dr. Skene's opinion is a probable one, that the church built by the Northumbrian architects was either that of Restennot or of Rosemarkie.<sup>1</sup> The round tower of Abernethy is evidently older than that of Brechin, and for this reason, as well as on account of the historical considerations we have adduced, it was most probably erected soon after the middle of the ninth century. The venerable structure has thus stood a thousand years, and has looked down on thirty generations of worshippers.

To this period belongs the legend of St. Adrian, which is given in the Aberdeen Breviary under the 4th of March. This missionary is represented as having come from Hungary, accompanied by 6006 clerics and others, to the eastern parts of Scotland, and as there labouring among the Pictish people. After a time, desiring to have a habitation of their own, they settled in the Isle of May, and there made a place of prayer. They occupied themselves in devotion till the Danes landed on the island and put them all to the sword. One of Adrian's company was Monanus; and the Breviary tells us that before the massacre by the Danes he preached the Gospel to the people of Fife in a place called Inverry, and that his relics there rest.<sup>2</sup> Wyntoun, in his Chronicle, which was written in the monastery of Lochleven, of which he was prior, gives a version of the legend differing but little from the foregoing, and supplying some additional details. He says that Adrian arrived during the reign of Constantine, which extended from 863 to 876, and asked leave from the king to preach the Christian faith, which

<sup>1</sup> "Celtic Scotland," ii. 233, 310.    <sup>2</sup> Breviary of Aberdeen, *Pars Hyem.*, fol. lix.



he granted, and at the same time gave them permission to dwell in any part of his land which they might prefer.

“Than Adriane wyth hys cumpany  
Togydder come tyl Caplawchy,  
Thare sum in to the Ile off May  
Chesyd<sup>1</sup> to byde to thare enday.<sup>2</sup>  
And sum off thame chesyd be northe  
In steddys sere<sup>3</sup> the Wattyre off Forth.  
In Inverey Saynet Monane,  
That off that cumpany wes ane,  
Chesyd hym sa nere the se  
Till lede hys lyff; thare endyt he.”

After describing the arrival of the heathen Danes in Scotland, and their consigning many to martyrdom, Wyntoun adds:—

“And upon Haly Thursday  
Saynt Adriane thai slwe in May  
Wyth mony off hys cumpany;  
In to that haly Ile thai ly.”<sup>4</sup>

The story of Adrian's coming from Hungary, which so far resembles the Eastern origin ascribed to Boniface and Servanus, is no doubt fabulous. Hector Boece tells us that while some assert that these holy martyrs were Hungarians, others say they were a company gathered together from Scots and Angles;<sup>5</sup> and this is probably the true account. There are traditions which seem to indicate an extensive immigration of Scots, at least, into the east of Scotland about this time, in consequence both of the establishment of a Scottish dynasty on the Pictish throne, and of the havoc wrought on Irish monasteries by the Danes, which induced the ecclesiastics of that country to seek refuge in Scotland. This would so far account for so great a multitude being said to accompany Adrian, which Fordun, however, reduces to a hundred. There is independent evidence that the Danes, who were called Dubhgaill or Black Strangers, were driven out of Ireland about this period by the Norwegians, who were called Fingaill or White Strangers, and also Lochlannach, or people of Lochlann; that they burned the abbey of Coldingham in 870; and invaded Fife and defeated the

<sup>1</sup> “Chesyd,” chose.

<sup>2</sup> “Enday,” day of ending or of death.

<sup>3</sup> “Steddys sere,” places several. <sup>4</sup> Wyntoun, “Chron.” vi. 8. <sup>5</sup> “Scot. Hist.” fol. ccxiii.



men of Alban in the year 876 at Inverdoval, in the parish of Forgan, where King Constantine himself was slain.<sup>1</sup>

There was a St. Moinnenn, who was bishop of Clonfert in Ireland, and died in 571. His day is the 1st of March—the same as that of St. Monanus, who, according to the legend, preached the Gospel at Inverry, and whose relics rest there.<sup>2</sup> It has been conjectured that instead of a living St. Monanus labouring at Inverry (now called St. Monance), where a church was afterwards dedicated to him, it was only the bones of the Bishop of Clonfert which were brought thither.<sup>3</sup> But it is more probable that there were two saints of the name, and that the circumstance that their day is said to have been the same arose from the one saint being confounded with the other. The name Adrian may be the Celtic Odran Latinized. This, with the Celtic “mo” prefixed to it, gives a word similar to Macgidrin—the name of a saint which in various forms appears in the north of Fife and neighbourhood. The churches of Flisk and Lindores were dedicated to St. Macgidrin, and the same name appears on Macduff’s Cross. At Flisk, St. Muggin is a modern corruption of it. A church near Dron, called Exmacgirdle, which is a corruption of Ecclesmacgidrin, or the church of Macgidrin, had the same dedication, and from this saint the name of Mugdrum also is probably derived. Caplawchy, now Caiplic, is on the Fife coast, opposite the Isle of May. Here is a cave with many small crosses incised on its walls; and over it there was till lately another cave or chamber, with a bench cut in the rock. Tradition asserts these to have been St. Adrian’s oratory and abode.<sup>4</sup>

Towards the end of the ninth century an important boon appears to have been conferred on the Church in Pictland by

<sup>1</sup> See Skene, “Celtic Scotland,” i. 327; ii. 315.

<sup>2</sup> It is scarcely necessary to state that the “day” of a saint was not the anniversary of his birth, but of his departure to a better world. In certain cases, however, and for some special reason, a saint was commemorated on a different day.

<sup>3</sup> Skene, *ibid.* ii. 314.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 316; Forbes’ “Kalendars,” 268, 412; Stuart, “Records of the Priory of the Isle of May,” v. Bishop Forbes gives in “Historians of Scotland,” vol. v., the following list of caves—some of which we have already mentioned—asserted by tradition to have been the abodes of Scottish saints:—Ninian’s, at Glasserton; Medana’s, Kirkmaiden; Serf’s, Dysart; Phillan’s, Pittenweem; Adrian’s, Caipley; Constantine’s, Fifeness; Rule’s, St. Andrews; Ciaran’s, Cantyre; Gernadius’, Kenedor; Laisren’s or Moli’s, Holy Island; Fergus’, Glamis; Mac-na-Charnaig’s, Eilan Mohr; Columba’s, Cove in Knapdale; Monan’s, St. Monance; Cuthbert’s, Weem.

the removal of a grievance to which it had been subjected. In the early Irish Church, land bestowed as an endowment on a church or monastery—which was called its *Termon* land—possessed the privilege of sanctuary, and was “free,” in the sense that the chief who granted it thereby denuded himself of all right to exact from it rent or tribute of any kind. Nevertheless subsequent chiefs frequently attempted to frustrate the liberality of the original donor by making such lands liable to the same exactions as others belonging to the tribe. If successful in this object, they were said to bring the Church under servitude. When Nectan expelled the Columban monks from his dominions in the early part of the eighth century, and the monastic system was to some extent impaired by the introduction of secular clergy, it is probable that the Church lands would be subjected to the same burdens as other lands. To some such state of matters the chronicles seem to refer when they state concerning King Giric, who reigned from the year 878 to 889, that “this is he who first gave liberty to the Scottish Church, which had been until now under servitude according to the law and custom of the Picts.”<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this statement probably is, that Giric freed the Church from all secular exactions in regard to the lands which had been bestowed on it. In the Anglic Church during the eighth century monks were “under servitude in royal works and buildings,”<sup>2</sup> and not long before the concession of this boon by Giric they had been exempted from such obligations by King Ethelwulf. Giric’s name has been perpetuated in that of Eglisgirk, or Greg’s church, otherwise called St. Cyrus, from Ciricus, the saint to whom it was dedicated.<sup>3</sup>

The foregoing record of Giric’s liberality possesses an additional interest as being the first in which the Church is called “the Scottish Church.” Although a Scottish dynasty had been ruling over Pictland since the accession of Kenneth Macalpin, it was still called the Pictish kingdom, or, from its capital, the kingdom of Scone; and its kings were styled kings of the Picts. But near the end of the ninth century Fortrenn or Pictland begins to appear under the name of Alban, and

<sup>1</sup> “Chron. Picts and Scots,” 151.

<sup>2</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, “Councils,” iii. 382.

<sup>3</sup> Skene, “Celtic Scotland,” i. 333; ii. 320–323.

its sovereigns to be called kings of Alban, which embraced the districts extending from the Forth to the Spey. The districts north of the Spey were not really included in the kingdom of Alban, though to some extent they acknowledged its supremacy. The Picts and Scots were becoming more and more amalgamated, but the latter were the ruling race.<sup>1</sup>

About the beginning of the tenth century the primacy was transferred from Abernethy to St. Andrews, of which the first bishop was Cellach, who, as being the sole prelate of the kingdom, was styled Bishop of Alban. In the sixth year of the reign of Constantine, son of Aedh, or about 908, according to the Pictish Chronicle, this king "and Cellach the bishop vowed to protect the laws and discipline of the faith, and the rights of the churches and of the Gospel, equally with the Scots, on the Hill of Belief (which, according to the Chronicle, from that day deserved its name), near the royal city of Scone."<sup>2</sup> The Churches of Dalriada and Pictland were thus united into one; the freedom of the Pictish portion of it from servitude, formerly granted by King Giric, was no doubt confirmed; and it was placed on a footing of equality with the rest of the Church.

This King Constantine—for there were several others of the same name—was much engaged in warfare, and had been defeated in the great battle of Brunanburg in England, which was fought in 937. Five years after this disaster, when he was well advanced in years, he resigned his throne, and, in the language of the period, took the pilgrim's staff.<sup>3</sup> In other words, he became a monk. According to the "Great Register" of St. Andrews priory, he was made abbot of the Culdees of that place, where he spent five years in the discharge of the duties of the office, and where he died and was buried. Other chronicles state that he survived ten years after his abdication of the sovereignty of his kingdom.<sup>4</sup> Soon after this, mention is made of an Irishman named Aedh who had come "in pilgrimage" all the way to St. Andrews, where he died in the year 963.

Constantine's battles are noteworthy as giving us a glimpse of some peculiar characteristics of Celtic religion. In the third

<sup>1</sup> Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 323.

<sup>2</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See Reeves, "The Culdees of the British Islands," 35.

year of his reign the Norwegians plundered Dunkeld and the whole kingdom of Alban. In the following year they were cut off in Strathearn by the men of Fortrenn, and Imhair their commander was slain. This engagement was the first in connection with which is recorded the use of the venerated crosier of Columba as a standard. The Irish Annals give us the following account of what took place:—"One time, when Imhar Conung was a young man, he came to Alba, with three great battalions, to plunder it. The men of Alba, both lay and clerics, fasted, and prayed till morning to God and Columcille; they made earnest entreaty to the Lord; they gave great alms of food and raiment to the churches and the poor; received the body of the Lord at the hands of their priests; and promised to do all kinds of good works, as their clergy would order them, and that their standard in going forth to any battle should be the crosier of Columkille. Wherefore it is called the *Cath-bhuaidh* from that day to this. And this is a befitting name for it; for they have often gained victory in battle by it, as they did at that time, when they placed their hope in Columkille." Again, in the year 918 the Danes under Regnwald their leader—who six years before had ravaged Dunblane—invaded Alban, and King Constantine, in alliance with the Northumbrians, encountered them at Tynemoor in East Lothian, and routed them with great slaughter. Of this engagement the same Annals tell us:—"About the same time the Fortrenns and Lochlanns fought a battle. Bravely indeed the men of Alba fought this battle, for Columkille was aiding them; for they had prayed to him most fervently, because he was their apostle, and it was through him that they received the faith. The Albanians gained victory and triumph, killed many of the Lochlanns after their defeat, and their king was slain."<sup>1</sup>

This crosier was not the only reliquary of Columba that was borne in battle in order to procure victory. Another was the *Breacbennach* or *Brecbannoch*—for the word is variously written—which, as we have seen, was originally preserved at Forglen. What it was is not certainly known, as no description of it has come down to us. It was called a *vcxillum*, and is gener-

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, ed. 1874, xcix.; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 339, 347.



ally supposed to have been a banner, which the saint had in some way used, or which he had blessed; as we know that the veil or covering of St. Cuthbert's chalice was borne as a banner by the English at Neville's Cross, where it proved so fatal to the Scots. On the other hand, the Irish *vexilla* were boxes or shrines; and it has been suggested that the Brebannoch may have been some relic of Columba inclosed in a metal shrine. King William the Lion made a grant of the lands of Forglen, with the Brebannoch, to the Abbey of Arbroath; and the convent was thereby held bound "to render the service in the army with the said Brebannoch which was due to the king from these lands." In 1314 the abbot and monks granted the lands of Forglen and the Brebannoch to Malcolm of Monymusk, who came under the same obligation. They were afterwards conferred on the Irvines of Drum; and there is charter evidence that they remained in possession of this family till near the Reformation. It is a curious coincidence that there has been in the house of Monymusk from time immemorial an ancient reliquary or shrine, in the form of a small wooden box plated with bronze and silver, and richly ornamented in the most beautiful style of Celtic art; and it is not an improbable supposition that this may be the veritable Brebannoch which was of old believed to bring victory to the Scottish armies.<sup>1</sup>

Another reliquary of St. Columba, which was employed in similar way in Ireland, was the *Cathach* or Battler. This was a Psalter, which there is some reason for believing to have been penned by the saint himself. It is further asserted to have been the identical book copied by him from one belonging to Finnian, the dispute about which was alleged to have been the cause of the battle of Cooldrevny. When it was carried on the breast of a co-arb or cleric thrice, right-wise, round the army of the Cinell Conaill—in whose custody it was—when they were going to battle, they believed they would return victorious. So late as 1497 the *Cathach* was carried in battle, but it failed to procure the expected victory. This famous Psalter and its silver case are still preserved in Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, xcvi.; Anderson, "Scotland in Early Christian Times," 244, 250.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves' Adamnan, lxxxv.



In the tenth century, and during the reign of the above-mentioned Constantine, flourished St. Cadroe, of whom a Life has come down to us. As the author of it states that he obtained his information from disciples of the saint, it was probably written about the end of the century, and is interesting on account both of its antiquity and its contents. Cadroe was born in Scotland about the year 900. His father, Faiteach, was related to the royal family, and his mother, Bania, was of noble extraction. His parents on two different occasions made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Columba at Iona. His father desired to dedicate Cadroe to the service of God. He was therefore educated by his paternal uncle Beanus, and afterwards sent to be trained at Armagh. Returning to Britain, he taught his countrymen, and especially those of them who were to teach others. He was also instructed, as he believed, by visions to quit his native country, and devote himself to the service of God in a foreign land. His intention to depart filled with grief the people of every age and rank. "Consider," they urged, "what amount of good you would do by teaching so many who need instruction." Moved by their tears, he hesitates somewhat to leave them.

Near to a large river stood the trunk of a tree. Thither he retires by night, unseen by human eye; and, having cast off his garments, enters the river in the rigour of extreme cold. Holding in his hand a rope which he had tied to the tree, lest he should be borne down by the current, he recites the Psalms, from the 118th to the 123rd. Constantine, the king, as well as the whole people, still try to retain him. Afterwards he enters the monastery of St. Bridget in order to pray, when the people, being sent for from divers places, fill the noble and rustic church. The relics of the saints are placed before him, and he is adjured not to leave his country. At length a certain abbot named Mailodarius comes with the king, and persuades the people to let him go. The river here mentioned was apparently the river Earn. Beanus was the St. Bean to whom was dedicated the church of Kinkell in Strathearn. The monastery of St. Bridget was no doubt that of Abernethy, and Mailodarius was its abbot.

Setting forth, he arrives in the land of the Cumbrians, King

Constantine himself conducting him thither. Here he is kindly received by King Donald, who is a kinsman of his own, and who accompanies him to Leeds, on the frontier of his kingdom. Cadroe goes thence to York, to London, and lastly to Winchester, where he miraculously stays the progress of a fire. Here King Hegmund entertains him, and sends Otho, archbishop of Canterbury, with him to the seaport whence he is to embark for the Continent. Of his subsequent career it is sufficient here to state that he entered a Benedictine monastery, was afterwards abbot of two others in succession, and ended his days near Metz, in the seventieth year of his age and the thirtieth of his wanderings.<sup>1</sup>

The Scottish Church was ruled by the bishops of St. Andrews as sole bishops of Alban for nearly two centuries. During that period there were eleven Celtic bishops, whose names are recorded, but few facts are known concerning them. Fothad, the successor of Cellach, was a party to an agreement made with the Culdees of Lochleven, whereby they gave the island (*locum cellulæ*) to the Bishop of St. Andrews on condition that he should provide them with food and raiment. Abbot Ronan, who represented the fraternity in this transaction, is described as "a man of admirable sanctity;" while the bishop, it is said, was "then and since celebrated throughout all Scotland, and was of commendable life."<sup>2</sup> The Pictish Chronicle states that during the reign of King Cuilean, which extended from 967 to 976, Marcan, son of Breodalaig, was slain in the church of St. Michael (which was one of the seven churches of St. Andrews); that Leot and Sluagadach went to Rome; that Maelbrigde, the bishop, died; and that Cellach (the second of that name) ruled in his stead.<sup>3</sup> Bower says that Cellach was the first who went to Rome for confirmation, and lived twenty-five years afterwards.<sup>4</sup> These statements probably refer to some contest for the succession to the bishopric, and to an appeal to the Pope by both parties in connection therewith. This is the first mention of the confirmation of a Scottish bishop by the Pope, and its authenticity appears doubtful.

<sup>1</sup> Part of the Life of St. Cadroe is printed in "Chron. Picts and Scots," 106-116; see also Forbes' "Kalendars," 293; "Anglo-Saxon Chron.," 947-952.

<sup>2</sup> "Registr. Prior. St. Andr.," 113.

<sup>3</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 10.

<sup>4</sup> "Scotichronicon," vi. 24.

Towards the end of the tenth century the church of Brechin was founded by Kenneth the Second, whose reign extended from the year 971 to 997. The statement of this fact forms the last sentence of the Pictish Chronicle, which is as follows:—"This is he who gave the great city of Brechin to the Lord." Only a place of note when the statement was written would have been thus described. Kenneth appears to have here founded and endowed a monastery, for such is the import of the word "city" (*civitas*) as here used; and its round tower, which is still in perfect preservation, crowned by an octagonal spirelet, but is of later type than that of Abernethy, shows that it was probably at first occupied by Irish monks. It afterwards possessed a body of Culdees. The Pictish Chronicle, the earliest and most valuable record of the kind which we possess, was most likely compiled by the monks of Brechin during Kenneth's reign, since it terminates before the close of that reign, and leaves blank the number of years to which it extended.

Meanwhile the kingdom of Alban was being gradually enlarged. In the year 945 Cumbria—that is, the dominion of the Strathclyde Britons, which was now so named, and which extended from the Clyde to the Derwent in Cumberland—was ceded to the Scots, though it had tributary or dependent kinglets for some time longer ere it was permanently absorbed into Scotland. In 1092, however, Cumbria south of the Solway Firth was wrested from the Scots, and the southern boundary of the Scottish kingdom was then fixed at the line which in that quarter has ever since divided it from England. A few years after 945 Dunedin, or Edinburgh, was evacuated by the Angles, who had hitherto possessed it, and added to the kingdom. This implied the cession of the district between the Esk and the Avon. In the year 1018 King Malcolm the Second seized a favourable opportunity for invading Northumbria, where he had been previously defeated. A great battle was fought at Carham on the Tweed, in which Malcolm gained a complete victory. The result was that the district north of the Tweed was ceded to the Scots, and this river became the southern boundary of the kingdom on its eastern side. The churches in Lothian, which had previously been

included in the diocese of Lindisfarne, would now be placed under the rule of the Bishop of St. Andrews as the sole bishop of Alban. During the reign of the same monarch another change took place in the designation of his dominion. Though the kings of Alban had been sometimes termed kings of the Scots, the word "Scotia" had been hitherto applied to Ireland. But Malcolm the Second was styled king of Scotia; and from the beginning of the eleventh century this superseded the previous name of Alban.

Maelduin, who was bishop of St. Andrews from the year 1028 to 1055, is mentioned as granting "the church of Markinch with its whole land to God, St. Servanus, and the Culdees of Lochleven."<sup>1</sup> This bishop was contemporary with "the usurper" Macbeth, whose liberality to the Culdees of Lochleven has been already noticed. Tuthald, the next bishop, granted the church of Scoonie to the same society.<sup>2</sup> Thus early did the evil practice commence, which prevailed so extensively in later times, of enriching monasteries by conferring on them the revenues of other churches. Tuthald's tenure of office was brief; and he was succeeded in the year 1059 by another, Fothad—the last of the Celtic bishops of St. Andrews.

We have now again to notice the depressed condition of Iona. The Danes were not the only enemies whose ravages were injurious to it. About the middle of the ninth century the Norwegians, a kindred people, appeared in the Western Islands; and in the year 878 their incursions led to the removal of the shrine and reliquaries of Columba to Ireland. The shrine was, however, afterwards restored to Iona. During the tenth century the occupation of the Western Islands by the Norwegians prevented communication between Iona and Scotland, and the abbacy became dependent on the Columban monasteries in Ireland, the superior of some one of which was usually appointed co-arb of Columcille. At two different periods we find an anchorite holding the abbacy of Iona as a dependent monastery. In the second of these cases the anchorite was also a bishop. An official called the *Aircinnech* makes his appearance about this time. He acted as a steward in collecting the rents and tributes due from the lands of the

<sup>1</sup> "Reg. Prior. St. Andr." 116.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 116.



monastery, and in managing its secular affairs in general. Anlaf Cuaran, king of the Danes of Dublin, is mentioned as coming in the year 980 "on pilgrimage" to Iona, and as dying there "after penance and a good life." But this was not a heathen Dane. He had obtained in marriage a daughter of King Constantine of Scotland, and had embraced Christianity and received baptism in Northumbria. There was a previous king of the Danes of Dublin named Anlaf, who in 942 had laid waste and burnt the church of St. Balthere at Tynningham, and thereafter suddenly perished. In 986 the Danes again plundered Iona, and slew the abbot and fifteen of the clergy. There is a tradition that Columba's shrine was carried on board ship by these spoilers, who expected to discover treasure in it; but that on finding it contained nothing except the bones of the saint, they threw it into the sea, and it was cast ashore at Downpatrick, where it was at least believed to be preserved in the following century.<sup>1</sup>

The Norwegians, who played an important part in the history of our country, and whose descendants still occupy a portion of it, were heathens as well as the Danes, with whom they are often confounded. Attracted first to our shores, about the commencement of the ninth century, by the love of plunder, they afterwards appeared in greater numbers as fugitives from the tyrannical rule of Harold Haarfager, or Fairhair, king of Norway. They colonized Orkney and Shetland and the Hebrides, and founded settlements also in Ireland and the Isle of Man. They termed the Western Islands the Sudreys, or Southern, to distinguish them from the Orkney or Northern Islands. From Orkney they spread in course of time into Caithness and Sutherland, and along the eastern seaboard of Scotland. About the year 870 Harold Haarfager, having fitted out a great expedition, subdued Orkney and Shetland, as well as other possessions of his expatriated countrymen; and appointed Scandinavian Earls, who acted as rulers under himself. This connection with the crown of Norway continued long afterwards. A Norse element was thus introduced among the Pictish population of these territories, and in Orkney and Shetland all traces of the primitive race disappeared.

<sup>1</sup> Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. chap. viii.



There is good reason to believe that the Celtic people of the Northern and Western Islands had been evangelized by the disciples of St. Columba, as other Irish missionaries carried the Gospel even to Iceland. The Norwegians who fled to Iceland to escape the tyranny of Harold Fairhair found there, on their arrival, Christians whom they called *Papæ* (fathers), a name anciently, and still in the Greek Church, applied to the clergy. These, not choosing to remain among heathens, departed, leaving behind them Irish books, bells, and crosiers. In Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebrides there are many places called Papa;<sup>1</sup> and the name is doubtless derived from Christian monks or fraternities whom the Norsemen found there, and who were so designated by them. Several churches in Orkney were dedicated to Columba. But the most interesting memorial of Christian occupation before the coming of the Norsemen consists of the remains of a group of ecclesiastical buildings on the Brough of Deerness. There are the ruins of a small church within a quadrangular stone wall. Irregularly situated around this are the foundations of eighteen separate cells which had been built of uncemented stones, and near them is a well. The whole was partly, if not entirely, inclosed by a stone wall, or *cashel*. In the sixteenth century the church was a celebrated resort of pilgrims. Here, then, we have what was evidently a Celtic monastery of the most primitive type.<sup>2</sup> Who was its founder is unknown. Adamnan informs us that Columba, happening to meet a ruler of the Orkney Islands at the royal seat of King Brude, where he was then staying, requested the king to instruct the ruler to protect his friend Cormac and his companions if they should come to Orkney while they were in search of a "desert," and that to this they owed their escape from impending death.<sup>3</sup> By some such fraternity the monastery on the Brough of Deerness was no doubt founded and occupied. But as in Iceland, so in the Northern Islands the influx of the heathen Scandinavians extinguished Christianity for a time.

The conversion of the Orcadians was at length brought

<sup>1</sup> In Orkney—Papa Westray, Papa Stronsay, Paplay (Papuli, the priest's district) in Holm, another Paplay in South Ronaldshay, and Papdale. In Shetland—Papa Stour, Papa Isle, and two Papills. In the Hebrides—two Pabbys, and Pappadill in Rum.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, "Scotland in Early Christian Times," 102.

<sup>3</sup> "Life of Columba," ii. 43.

about in a singular way. Sueno, the Christian king of Denmark, having overcome Olaf Tryggvesen and conquered his kingdom of Norway, issued a proclamation requiring the Norwegians to abandon their heathen gods and embrace Christianity. Olaf himself, who thus became the first Christian king of Norway, pursued a similar policy in Orkney. Having come to these islands he seized Earl Sigurd, and offered to spare his life if he would become a Christian and be baptized, and also publish the new religion throughout Orkney.<sup>1</sup> Sigurd consented to these terms, and thus his people were nominally converted from heathenism. Malcolm the Second, king of Scotland, afterwards—in 1008—gave his daughter in marriage to Earl Sigurd. Probably before the middle of the eleventh century Christianity had become the nominal faith of all the Norwegian inhabitants of Orkney, Shetland, and the Western Islands, as well as of the mainland of Scotland. Thorfinn, the son and successor of Earl Sigurd, and grandson of Malcolm, made a pilgrimage to Rome; and on his return he built, about the year 1064, a church at Birsay, called Christ's Church. This became the first seat of the bishopric of Orkney, which was subject to Drontheim, as was also the bishopric of the Isles.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the wife of Earl Sigurd King Malcolm had an elder daughter, who had previously been married to Crinan, abbot of Dunkeld. This fact introduces to our notice the state of decay into which the Celtic Church had by this time fallen. In the sixth and seventh centuries the abbot of a monastery was, like the other monks, bound to celibacy. There was now a change in this respect. At whatever time it had commenced, the existence of marriage amongst the clergy in the eleventh

<sup>1</sup> See Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 386.

<sup>2</sup> Cathedral churches in Norway were called "Christ's Church." About half a mile from the site of the church at Birsay, and close to the remains of an old Celtic burying-ground, there was discovered in 1862 a cist which, when opened, was found to contain a bell of the square shape peculiar to the old Celtic Church. It had evidently been buried to prevent its falling into the hands of the pagan Norwegians, and must have lain there for a thousand years. The bells of the Celtic Church were held in the greatest veneration, no doubt on account of their supposed connection with the founders of the churches to which they belonged. Surviving specimens are the bells of Burrian in North Ronaldshay; Kingoldrum; Birnie; Fortingall; Struan, in Athol; Insh, on the Spey; St. Finan, in Eilan Finan in Loch Shiel, near Ardnamurchan; Cladh Bhrennu and Balnahannait, both in Glenlycn; St. Fillan, in Glendochart. Several of these bells have stood for centuries in the open air, in old cemeteries, without other protection than the veneration of the people. (See Anderson's "Scotland in Early Christian Times," lecture v.)

century is rendered certain by the case of Crinan. Moreover, though styled "Abbot of Dunkeld," he was not an ecclesiastic, but a secular chief of great power and influence. A previous abbot of Dunkeld, named Duncan, was slain in the year 965 in the battle of Duncrub, where he headed his followers on behalf of one of the competitors for the crown. There is good reason for believing that Crinan was his lineal descendant; that the abbacy had been secularized; and, with its great possessions, had become hereditary in his family. He appears to have also held the monastery of Dull, with its very extensive territory.

On the death of King Malcolm the Second, Duncan, his grandson, and son of Crinan, ascended the throne; and thus the lay abbot of Dunkeld gave to Scotland a new dynasty. Thorfinn, son of Sigurd, and cousin of King Duncan, had succeeded his father as Earl of Orkney, and had received from his grandfather, King Malcolm, the earldom of Caithness and Sutherland. Duncan now sought to obtain possession of Caithness, and the attempt to enforce his claim led to a war between himself and Thorfinn. In a great battle which was fought at Burghead, the king was defeated and put to flight. Macbeth, whose wife Gruoch—the Lady Macbeth of Shakespeare—was of royal extraction, being at this time Mormaer of Moray and leader of the king's forces, treacherously slew his defeated sovereign, and sided with the victorious Thorfinn. They then divided the kingdom between them. Along with the northern territory, Thorfinn took the districts on the east coast as far as the Firth of Tay, while Macbeth obtained those south and west of the Tay, with Scone the capital.

Though the deed by which he rose to power must be condemned, Macbeth was by no means the cruel despot he is represented by Fordun<sup>1</sup> to have been; and his reign proved beneficial to his subjects. Crinan, abbot of Dunkeld, while attempting to wrest from him the sovereignty, in the interests of the children of his son King Duncan, was slain in battle in the year 1045. Five years later Macbeth went to Rome, thus following the example of Thorfinn, if they did not proceed thither together. While in Rome, he is said to have freely distributed silver to the poor; and it is probable that his motive in

<sup>1</sup> Fordun's Chronicle, iv. 45, 46.

undertaking such a journey was to procure from the Pope absolution for the murder of Duncan. We may charitably hope it was contrition for this crime that prompted his grants to the hermits of Lochleven, which we have noticed in another connection, and which the register of St. Andrews informs us were made "with the utmost veneration and devotion, from motives of piety, and for the benefit of their prayers."<sup>1</sup>

Malcolm Canmore was a child at the time of his father's assassination. When he had attained to manhood, Siward, earl of Northumbria, who was a Dane and a kinsman of Malcolm, made war upon Macbeth in order to drive him from the throne. In this trial of strength Macbeth appears to have been supported by his subjects. A battle was fought at Scone in 1054, but though Siward was said to be victorious, he failed to accomplish his purpose. In 1057 Malcolm himself made an attempt to subdue Macbeth, and this proved to be successful. Having driven him beyond the Mounth, he slew him at Lumphanan. Earl Thorfinn having died about the same time, Malcolm, probably from motives of policy, married his widow Ingiobiorg, by whom he had two sons. On her death he married the Princess Margaret—in whom Scotland received an English queen through whose influence, and the more direct exercise of power by her sons, the old Celtic Church, which looked to Columba as its founder, was to be superseded by a different organization, of which the acknowledged head was the Roman pontiff.

Queen Margaret is the first woman in Scottish history whose personality has been set before us in distinct and vivid colours in a contemporary biography. Her life and character will be described in connection with the new system of Church polity of which she laid the foundations. We refer to her in this place on account of the light which her dealings with the Scottish clergy, as described by Turgot her biographer, shed on the state of the old Celtic Church; presenting, as that Church did, in its rites and usages a sharp contrast to the Church of her youth, which she regarded as forming the correct rule in all such matters.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Registr. Pr. St. Andr.," 12, 114.

<sup>2</sup> Turgot's "Life of St. Margaret" is printed in Pinkerton's "Vitæ Sanctorum Scotiæ," and is contained in vol. ii. of Metcalfe's edition of the same, 1889. It has been translated by W. Forbes-Leith, S. J. 1884.



"The zeal of God's house, which is the Church," says her biographer, "had so consumed her, that with apostolic faith she laboured to root up utterly lawless practices which had sprung up therein. Observing that many customs prevailed in the Scottish nation which were contrary to the rule of the right faith and the holy usage of the universal Church, she caused frequent Councils to be held, in order that by some means or other she might, through the help of Christ, bring back into the way of truth those who had gone astray. Among these Councils the most important was that in which for three days she, with a very few of her friends, fought against the defenders of perverse custom with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. In this discussion the king himself took part as an assessor and chief actor, being fully prepared both to say and do whatever she might order in the matter at issue; and as he knew the English language quite as well as his own (the Gaelic), he was in this Council a very careful interpreter for either side."<sup>1</sup>

In the history of the Scottish Church this Council was a unique occurrence. The questions discussed were such as ecclesiastics might consider it to be their peculiar function to determine without extraneous interference. But their antagonist was a lady, royal by birth, by marriage a queen, whose ascetic but genuine piety was not less celebrated than her majestic beauty. By her side sat her husband, their sovereign, possessing both the power and the will to enforce her wishes. In these circumstances the result was a foregone conclusion. The Celtic clergy could only confess themselves beaten in each successive encounter. Three centuries and a half before, the Columban monks had suffered expulsion beyond Drumalban rather than submit to Nectan's decree prohibiting their ancient usages. But the monastic Church was then instinct with zeal and energy; now it was effete and spiritless: death could not contend with life. Turgot describes the conversion of the clergy to Margaret's opinions as the result of conviction produced by her arguments. But even if the customs she assailed had been all of them Scriptural, the Council would probably have consented as they actually did, to abandon them.

<sup>1</sup> Turgot, Pinkerton's "*Vitæ Sanct. Scot.*" (edition 1889), ii. 168.



Introducing the subject of discussion by premising, that all who were united in one faith with the Catholic Church ought not to differ from that Church by new and far-fetched usages, Margaret laid it down, in the first place, that those did not rightly keep the fast of Lent who commenced it on the Monday of the week following Ash Wednesday. The clerics replied, that they followed the authority of the Gospel, which relates that Christ fasted for six weeks. The queen rejoined: "In this you differ widely from the Gospel, wherein we read that our Lord fasted for forty days, which it is manifest you do not. For since you deduct the six Sundays from the fast, it is clear that thirty-six days only remain on which to fast. You ought therefore to begin your fast, as we do, four days before the commencement of Lent; that is, if you wish, according to our Lord's example, to observe an abstinence of forty days; otherwise you alone will be rejecting the authority of our Lord himself and the tradition of the entire Holy Church.' Convinced by this plain demonstration of the truth, these persons began henceforth to keep the solemnities of the fasts as Holy Church does everywhere."<sup>1</sup>

The good queen was here in error. It is clear that our Lord fasted forty days continuously. This was the practice of the Catholic Church till the eighth century. When fasting on the Lord's day was discontinued, four days were added to complete the number of forty. To the earlier practice the Scottish Church had up to this time adhered.

Margaret "now raised another point, and asked them to explain why they neglected on the festival of Easter to receive the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, according to the usage of the Holy and Apostolic Church? They answered her thus: 'The apostle, when speaking of persons who eat and drink unworthily, says, that they eat and drink judgment to themselves; and therefore, feeling that we are sinners, we fear to approach that sacrament, lest we should eat and drink judgment to ourselves.' 'What, then!' said the queen, 'shall no one that is a sinner partake of that holy mystery? If so, then it follows that no one should receive it, for no one is pure from sin, not even the infant whose life is but one day upon

<sup>1</sup> Turgot, Pinkerton's "Vitæ Sanct. Scot." (edition 1889), ii. 168.

the earth. And if no one ought to partake, why did the Lord make this announcement in the Gospel, Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you? But the passage you have quoted from the apostle must, according to the opinion of the Fathers, be quite differently interpreted; for he does not hold that all sinners are unworthy to take the sacraments of salvation; for after saying, He eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, he adds, Not discerning the Lord's body; that is, not distinguishing it by faith from bodily food, he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself. It is he who, without confession and repentance, with the defilement of his sins, presumes to approach the sacred mysteries; such an one, I say, it is, who eats and drinks judgment to himself. Whereas we, who many days before have made confession of our sins, are chastened with penance, worn with fasts, and with almsgiving and tears are washed from the stains of our sins, approaching in the Catholic faith the Lord's table on the day of His resurrection, partake of the body and blood of the spotless Lamb Jesus Christ, not to judgment, but to the remission of our sins, and as a health-giving preparation for the enjoyment of eternal blessedness.' To these arguments they could not answer a word, and, knowing now the meaning of the ordinances of the Church, observed them ever after in the sacrament of salvation. Further, there were some of the Scots who in certain places were wont to celebrate masses in I know not what barbarous rite, contrary to the usage of the whole Church, which the queen, fired with godly zeal, studied to suppress and abolish, so that henceforth, in the whole nation of the Scots, there was no one who presumed to continue the practice."<sup>1</sup> The nature of the "barbarous rite" is not stated. It has been conjectured that it may have been the use of the Gaelic language, instead of the Latin in which the service of the Catholic Church was performed. Apart from this question, the foregoing dialogue seems to show that, though the celebration of the Eucharist had not been discontinued, both clergy and people had altogether ceased to partake of the consecrated elements. This may be hardly credible, but the reasons which were urged against communicating at Easter were of equal

<sup>1</sup> Turgot, Pinkerton's "Vitæ Sanct. Scot." (edition 1889), ii. 169, 170.

force against communicating at any time. The Lord's Supper, as now celebrated, would appear to have been nothing more than the act of offering the so-called "sacrifice," and to have thus degenerated into an empty form. In this we have an impressive proof of the lifeless condition into which the Celtic Church had fallen. It is a curious circumstance that a similar superstitious practice of abstaining from the Communion prevails in some parts of the Highlands even at the present day.

"It was another custom of theirs," continues Turgot, "to neglect the reverence due to the Lord's day by devoting themselves to every kind of worldly labour on that as on other days, which she showed, as well by reason as by authority, to be unlawful. 'Let us hold in veneration the Lord's day,' she said, 'because of the resurrection of our Lord, which took place on that day, and let us do no servile works on it, since we know that on that day we were redeemed from the slavery of the devil. The blessed Pope Gregory also affirms the same, saying, We must cease from earthly labour on the Lord's day, and devote ourselves entirely to prayer, so that if we committed any negligence during the six days, it may be expiated by our prayers during the day of our Lord's resurrection.' Being unable to reply to these arguments of the wise queen, they, at her instance, ever after observed with due reverence the Lord's days, so that no one dared on these days to carry burdens or compel another to do so."<sup>1</sup> In Adamnan's account of the last day of Columba's life there are indications, as we have seen, of the existence in the Celtic Church of a custom of resting from work on the seventh day. But while it was the Jewish Sabbath which seems to have been thus kept, religious services in memory of Christ's resurrection were held on the Lord's day. Whether Saturday continued to be observed as the day of rest till the eleventh century we have no means of determining. Be this as it may, Queen Margaret's aim was most praiseworthy in seeking to prohibit servile work on the Lord's day.

The like commendation belongs to her for her action in reference to other customs of the Celtic Church thus described by her biographer:—"She also showed how utterly to be

<sup>1</sup> Turgot, Pinkerton's "*Vitæ Sanct. Scot.*" (edition 1889), ii. 170.

execrated, and shunned by the faithful like death itself, was the marriage of a man with his stepmother, or with the wife of his deceased brother—practices which had hitherto prevailed in this country. Many other inveterate customs, which were contrary to the rule of faith and the institutions and observances of the Church, she caused to be condemned in this Council, and expelled from her realm. For everything which she proposed she supported so strongly by the testimonies of sacred Scripture and of the teaching of the holy Fathers, that no one on the opposite side could say one word against them; nay, rather, giving up their obstinacy, and yielding to reason, they willingly undertook to fulfil everything she desired.”<sup>1</sup>

We further learn that in the eleventh century St. Andrews was much frequented by the devout, who flocked to it from all parts of the country, no doubt in consequence of its possessing what were believed to be some of the bones of that apostle who had been substituted for St. Peter as the patron saint of Scotland. Queen Margaret erected dwellings on both shores of “the sea which divides Lodoneia from Scotia,” that is, the Firth of Forth, in order to furnish shelter and refreshment for the poor people and the pilgrims after the fatigues of the journey. She also provided servants to attend to their wants, and ships to carry them across the firth free of charge.<sup>2</sup> It appears, moreover, that there were still many anchorites throughout Scotland, who, by their self-inflicted austerities, tacitly protested against the degeneracy of the Church. They were, says Turgot, “shut up in separate cells in divers places throughout the kingdom, and leading lives of great strictness in the flesh, but not according to the flesh; for being upon earth, they lived the life of angels. These the queen often busied herself in visiting and conversing with, for in them she loved and venerated Christ, and she recommended herself to their prayers. And when she could not prevail with them to accept any earthly gift from her, she urgently entreated them to deign to bid her perform some almsdeed or work of mercy, and forthwith this devout woman fulfilled whatever was their pleasure, either by helping the poor out of their poverty, or relieving the distressed in whatsoever miseries they might be suffering.”<sup>3</sup> On the

<sup>1</sup> Turgot, Pinkerton's “*Vitæ Sanct. Scot.*” (edition 1889), ii. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 173.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



island of Inchcolm there still exists an oratory rudely constructed of stone, with vaulted roof, and of very small dimensions. It is of so primitive a type that it may have owed its erection to Columba himself during his missionary labours among the southern Picts, or to an immediate disciple of his. Here during the reign of King Alexander the First, which commenced only fourteen years after the death of Queen Margaret his mother, lived a hermit who followed the discipline of Columba, and subsisted on small fishes, shell-fish, and the milk of a cow.<sup>1</sup> Of the anchorites whom the good queen frequently visited, and to whose prayers she recommended herself, we may well believe that this hermit of Columba's Isle, or some other recluse who had there made his abode, was one, since the place was so near to Dunfermline, where much of her life was spent.

We have striking proof of the decay of the Celtic Church in a statement concerning its condition at St. Andrews, which occurs among other extracts preserved from its "great register," now lost. The statement appears to have been drawn up about the middle of the twelfth century, but the abuses it describes had existed long before that period. Having adverted to the decay of religion at St. Andrews, it proceeds thus:—"There were kept up, however, in the church of St. Andrews, such as it then was, by carnal succession, a society of thirteen, commonly called Keledei, whose manner of life was shaped more in accordance with their own fancy and human tradition than with the precepts of the holy Fathers. Nay, even to the present day their practice continues the same; and though they have some things in common, these are such as are less in amount and value, while they individually enjoy the larger and better portion, just as each of them happens to receive gifts, either from friends who are united to them by some private tie, such as kindred or connection, or from those whose *soul friends*, that is, spiritual advisers, they are, or from any other source. After they are made Keledei, they are not allowed to keep their wives within their lodgings, nor any other women, who might give rise to injurious suspicions.

"Moreover, there were seven personæ, or beneficiaries, who

<sup>1</sup> *Scotichronicon*, v. 37.



divided among themselves the offerings of the altar; of which seven portions the bishops used to enjoy but one, and the hospital another; the remaining five were apportioned to the other five members, who performed no duty whatever, either at altar or church, and whose only obligation was to provide, after their custom, lodging and entertainment for pilgrims and strangers when more than six chanced to arrive, determining by lot whom and how many each of them was to receive. The hospital, it is to be observed, had continual accommodation for a number not exceeding six.

"The above-mentioned beneficiaries were also possessed of their private revenues and property, which, upon their death, their wives, whom they openly lived with, and their sons or daughters, their relatives, or sons-in-law, used to divide among themselves; even the very offerings of the altar at which they did not serve—a profanation which one would blush to speak of, if they had not chosen to practise it." We further learn that "the lands called the Boar's Chace, which King Hungus had presented to God and to the holy apostle St. Andrew, at the time that the relics of St. Andrew arrived, had been subsequently usurped; and that there were none that served at the altar of the blessed apostle, nor used mass to be celebrated there, except upon the rare occasions when the king or bishop visited the place; for the Keledei were wont to say their office after their own fashion in a nook of a church which was very small."<sup>1</sup>

From the statements in this document it appears that the ecclesiastical community of St. Andrews was at this time parted into two sections, having two churches. One was the church containing the altar of St. Andrew, and its revenues were enjoyed by the seven beneficiaries described. There was no service in this church, except when the king or bishop visited it. The other was a very small church, in which divine service was performed by thirteen Culdees, probably the prior and twelve brethren, according to their own rite. These, as well as the others, were married, and were the only clerical portion of the society. While all are severely censured, the Culdees are represented as less negligent of their duty than the five bene-

<sup>1</sup> "Chron. Picts and Scots," 188.

ficiaries, who were virtually laymen, and held and transmitted the church endowments by hereditary succession.<sup>1</sup>

There is too abundant evidence that this state of things was not confined to St. Andrews, but that the abuses which existed there, and at Dunkeld and Dull, prevailed to a great extent elsewhere, though with varying details, according to the different circumstances of each monastery. The process of declension had been going on for a lengthened period. The introduction of secular clergy in the eighth century probably led, even at that early time, to a partial alienation of church endowments, and also to the marriage of some of the clergy. But it was the Danish and Norwegian invasions which had proved most injurious to the monasteries. Under the disorganization which resulted from this cause the discipline of the monks was relaxed, and their lands were appropriated by churchmen for their personal and family aggrandizement. The strict observance of monastic celibacy produced a reaction; and the marriage of clerics, which, though contrary to the vows of the monks and the discipline of the other clergy, was not unlawful till the year 1139, when the second Council of Lateran made it so, at length became general. Church benefices then descended from father to son, and the priesthood became a hereditary caste, than which a worse evil could scarcely befall a church or nation. This result prevailed in Ireland, where ecclesiastical offices of all kinds had in most cases become hereditary, and also in Wales. In England, even at the close of the twelfth century, it is recorded that a parish church in Norfolk descended from father to son without any presentation. In Scotland the evil attained greater dimensions. In the diocese of Glasgow, during the same century, sons claimed their fathers' churches by hereditary right, and the Pope was under the necessity of empowering the bishops to connive at the abuse.<sup>2</sup> But at an earlier period the abbot and higher officials of monasteries had ceased to take clerical orders, while retaining the nomenclature and revenues of the abbacy. The discontinuance of celibacy is evident from the use of such names as *Macnab*, the son of

<sup>1</sup> See Reeves, "The Culdees of the British Islands," 39; Skene, "Celtic Scotland," ii. 358.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Joseph Robertson's "Statuta Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ," i. ccxiv.

the abbot, and *Mactaggart*, the son of the priest.<sup>1</sup> When the possession of a benefice no longer inferred the performance of clerical functions, these were devolved on a body of Culdees, and sometimes on a single priest, who remained the sole representative of the monastic community. These clerics received a small portion of the endowment, while the larger share was appropriated by the abbot as a lay magnate. The territory which belonged to the old Celtic monasteries was frequently termed *Abdaine*, or abbacy, which in Latin was written *Abthania*. From this came the word *Abthane*, which Fordun, and others after him, have erroneously understood as denoting an office or dignity, like the word Thane.<sup>2</sup>

The Celtic Church had thus ceased to fulfil the purpose for which it had been endowed, and the state of decrepitude into which it had fallen foreboded its overthrow. This was accomplished by Queen Margaret and her sons, especially by King David I. Dioceses and parishes superseded the tribal monasteries. The monastic orders of the Church of Rome took the place, and received what remained of the endowments, of the Columban monks. The last abbot of Iona whose name is recorded died in the year 1100. The community maintained a chequered existence for a century longer, when they probably became members of the Benedictine monastery which had there been founded. The Culdees were either suppressed or transformed into regular canons. At St. Andrews they lingered on till the year 1332, when they are mentioned for the last time.

“And thus,” says Dr. Skene, “the old Celtic Church came to an end, leaving no vestiges behind it, save here and there the roofless walls of what had been a church, and the numerous old burying-grounds, to the use of which the people still cling with tenacity, and where occasionally an ancient Celtic cross tells of its former state. All else has disappeared; and the

<sup>1</sup> The abbacy of St. Fillan's monastery of Glendochart became hereditary in the family of Macnab. For the history of the Coygerach, or crosier, of St. Fillan and of its hereditary keepers, named Jore or Dewar; its recovery from Canada, whither it had been carried by the survivor of the family; and its preservation in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries, Edinburgh, see Anderson's “Scotland in Early Christian Times,” lecture vi.

<sup>2</sup> The following Abthannies appear in ancient records:—Dull—Abthania (now Appin), Maddyruin (now Madderty in Strathearn); Melginch; Kilmichel et Lerenach (Kirk-michael, Perthshire); Vetus Munros (Old Montrose); Monifod (Monifieth); Ecclesgreig (St. Cyrus); Rossinclerach (Rossie, Carse of Gowrie); Kyngorne—Abthania (now Abden); Lismore—Apthane (now Appin).—“*Historians of Scotland*,” iv. 413.

only records we have of their history are the names of the saints by whom they were founded preserved in old calendars, the fountains near the old church bearing their name, the village fairs of immemorial antiquity held on their day, and here and there a few lay families holding a small portion of land as hereditary custodiers of the pastoral staff or other relic of the reputed founder of the church, with some small remains of its jurisdiction."

In looking back across the intervening centuries, we feel less disposed to fix our attention on the ultimate decay of the Celtic Church than to remember its pristine zeal and energy. Nor should we forget that it was from the island monastery of Iona that Columba and his disciples issued forth for the conversion of our pagan ancestors, and that they kindled a light which has never since been extinguished.







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